

THE  
FERGUSONS  
OF TEXAS

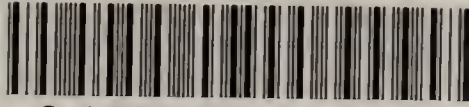


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# **The Fergusons of Texas**

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# The Fergusons of Texas

or

“Two Governors for the Price of One”

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A biography of James Edward Ferguson  
and his wife, Miriam Amanda Ferguson,  
ex-Governors of the State of Texas



*By Their Daughter*

**OIDA FERGUSON NALLE**



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**THE NAYLOR COMPANY**

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The Legends of the

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## DEDICATION

*I have always been glad that I am a Ferguson. Because I am one, I have known that there would never be any danger of my marrying one.*

*In appreciation of his long years of patient toleration of a Ferguson, I dedicate this book to my beloved husband,*

GEORGE SAMPSON NALLE





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## FOREWORD

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IN THIS VOLUME, Ouida Ferguson Nalle brings to her readers the gripping and fascinating story of the most colorful personalities ever to appear on the horizon of the Lone Star State — THE FERGUSONS OF TEXAS — her “Daddy” and “Mamma” — “Governor Jim” and “Governor Miriam.” She skillfully unravels the political issues which brought them to the center of the Texas political arena and focused on them the relentless public gaze.

The Fergusons were the most beloved and idolized public servants in the minds of the plain people, and the most hated and despised in the minds of most of the well-to-do that Texas politics has ever produced. There were no idle or dull moments when the Fergusons were in Austin: all was action. Everyone was either for “Ma” and “Pa” or against them. No one was on the fence, and no one was half-hearted in either praise or denunciation.

The Governors Ferguson drew to themselves a singular position never before attained in American politics. James E. Ferguson was twice elected governor, and after his impeachment his faithful, talented and devoted wife, Miriam Amanda, became the first woman governor to be elected in any of the states of the Union. In each of the four separate political contests, the entire state was thrown into consternation, and political pandemonium reigned as never before in all the days of the turbulent history of Texas since her war for Independence.

The people, the plain people, took the Fergusons to their hearts. The farmers, hardy sons of the soil; the laboring people; the "under man" — never deserted their idol. And he never failed them — never forsook them. As long as he lived he was their leader.

Few men ever possessed as many high qualities for leadership. James E. Ferguson looked the part of a statesman and he acted the part of one. Governor Ferguson studied, understood and revered our Constitution. He believed in, and was an eloquent champion of, the American form of government. He exercised a sense of fairness and justice in his dealings with his fellow men not always found in men in high places of public trust. His love of right and justice for the common man, the plain citizen, was his strength — but it also brought about his downfall.

Governor Jim never found it in his heart to hold malice and hatred against any man. An ardent Ferguson supporter tells of an incident when a large number of Ferguson followers had gathered in Fort Worth, Texas, to select speakers for one of the ensuing famous campaigns. The name of a certain politician was mentioned and a round of "No!" "No!" by other members present concluded with the remark, "And I hate him."

Governor Jim, hearing the denunciation of a supporter, spoke up and said: "My young friend, I am older than you and have had a lot more experience in political campaigns. I have found," continued the Governor, "that if I hate just one person, I do not have time to do anything else. Won't you withdraw your objection to this speaker?" And, of course, the inexperienced yielded to the mature wisdom of the Governor.

Again, I should like to relate an incident which occurred at the time of the lively convention at Lubbock, Texas, where, as Ouida puts it, "No one knew what could happen, and the farmers and ranchers came in their high-heeled boots and spurs, carrying their pistols at the 'ready'."

I was to deliver the keynote speech on the first day of the convention, and was dressed in a new white suit with shoes and hat to match. It was very hot and sultry in Lubbock that day. As I left my room at the hotel and was turning my



key in the door, I observed only two doors down from me, a young man who had been pushed and locked out of his room and who was very loudly and vociferously demanding entrance. He did not have on a single stitch of clothes. I was amused at the affair, and waving my hand in his direction, made this remark to him: "Good luck, buddy," and proceeded to the elevator.

Immediately I was confronted by the irate young man, shaking his fist in my face as he cried out: "Don't you 'buddy' me — don't you 'buddy' me. I've a notion to paste you one in the nose!" While I was standing eye to eye with my young assailant, he cried out: "What's your name, anyway?" I replied. Immediately the whole atmosphere and his belligerent attitude changed, and 'my buddy' said: "Colonel Alvin Owsley, that big Jim Ferguson man? Put 'er there, buddy; put 'er there." There was magic in the Ferguson name.

Throughout the period during which he rose from the comparative obscurity of a successful farmer, country lawyer and banker to hold sway as the most powerful figure in Texas politics for more than a quarter of a century, he was sustained by the love and devotion of his good Christian wife. Her faith in Jim was absolute; it was beautiful.

The reign of "The Fergusons of Texas" long ago came to a close. In retrospect, one remembers that there were both victories and defeats. There were high days of exaltation and there were bitter-dreg days of humiliation and trial and impeachment. These were drained away through vindication at the polls and victory again at the hands of faithful followers.

The abiding influence in the life of Ouida Ferguson Nalle, from the time she was a little child, was her relation to her father. Her devotion to him, her admiration for him, and the close companionship with, and mutual affection for him were to last to the end of Governor Jim's days. She here tells for the first time many of the inside happenings in the daily life of her most exceptional and highly publicized parents. She figured in it and in every part of the fast-moving action of public life as well. A brave and courageous daughter, this Ouida, who, through the good and the evil times

seemed ever to draw nearer to her beloved parents — to “Daddy” who could do no wrong, and to “Mamma” who, of course, was always right. Her love of family seems beautiful and worth dwelling upon here.

— ALVIN MANSFIELD OWSLEY.

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## INTRODUCTION

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THIS BOOK is an account of fantastic courage in the face of insurmountable odds. It is flavored with audacious gamble, so necessary to success in the West. It is more than a dual biography. The lives of James Edward and Miriam Amanda Ferguson are so entwined that their history becomes a single story of love, work, failure, and success together. It cannot be denied that their teamwork and singleness of purpose did much toward the molding of statecraft in Texas for almost thirty years.

The physical and mental strength of the husband balanced against the intuitive, sensitive character of the wife produces a team of perfect symmetry. Both possess a common geographical background, yet each is the product of opposite roots. Theirs is the case of a poor minister's son marrying the daughter of a rich farmer. Geographical leavening is stronger perhaps in Texas than any other place in the world. I shall not attempt to explain or define it. Some say it is the air we breathe; others say that it comes from the water we drink, that flows through a common clay. However, there is an indefinable something, deep in the heart of every Texan, that makes us all akin.

In Texas, we take our politics seriously. Young and old, rich and poor alike, avidly follow the careers of their public servants.

Both my parents have been governors of Texas, each elected twice, since 1914. Since I was thirteen years old I

have been behind the scenes of the most colorful dual career in American politics. When the brickbats and bouquets were being tossed at the Fergusons, I was right behind the targets. I would not have traded that vantage spot for any other in the world. ACTION! ACTION! ACTION! For almost thirty years there was never a dull moment in the Ferguson family.

The Governors Ferguson, James Edward and Miriam Amanda, have never until now been put into a book. In writing this one I have known what I faced. Some Texans love "Jim and Ma" to the point of adoration while others hate and despise them. Both factions probably will criticize this book, either for daughterly bias or for undaughterly indiscretion, when actually I have merely tried to draw an unbiased picture of their virtues, accomplishments, faults and mistakes. I have always loved my parents devotedly, yet I could never have been called a doting daughter. While their political foes fought the Fergusons for only a little over a quarter of a century, in relays, I had perhaps more arguments with them and took more whippings at their hands than did any of their enemies. Fergusons disagree, fight it out in the family, forget it and go forward together.

Behind the Ferguson dual career is a love story that is almost Biblical: *Whither thou goest I will go . . . thy people shall be my people. . . .* As did Ruth of old, forsaking all others, Miriam Amanda Wallace devotedly shared her life, her strength, and her fortune with her husband and his family to the end of his life.

Thousands of Americans know more or less what the Fergusons did politically in Texas. How they did this is a story so thoroughly American that I think perhaps more than Texans will be interested in it. Much that is in this carefully documented account is known to few in Texas and not at all to the public, though we Fergusons lived most of thirty years under the hot light of publicity.

I am a Texan and a Ferguson and I make no apologies for my opinions. If I am accused of rattling the family political skeletons, I can only reply that I have tried to be honest, not sensational, though this is no political bedtime story. It is written in plain Texan, my native tongue.

My parents are commonly known as "Ma and Pa

Ferguson.” “Governor” applies to either. As for my calling my mother “Ma” — “Ma” just does not fit her dignity. The slogan “Me for Ma” helped elect her governor twice. She always took a firm stand against its private use, and when Mamma takes a firm stand — well, here is my story.

O.F.N.





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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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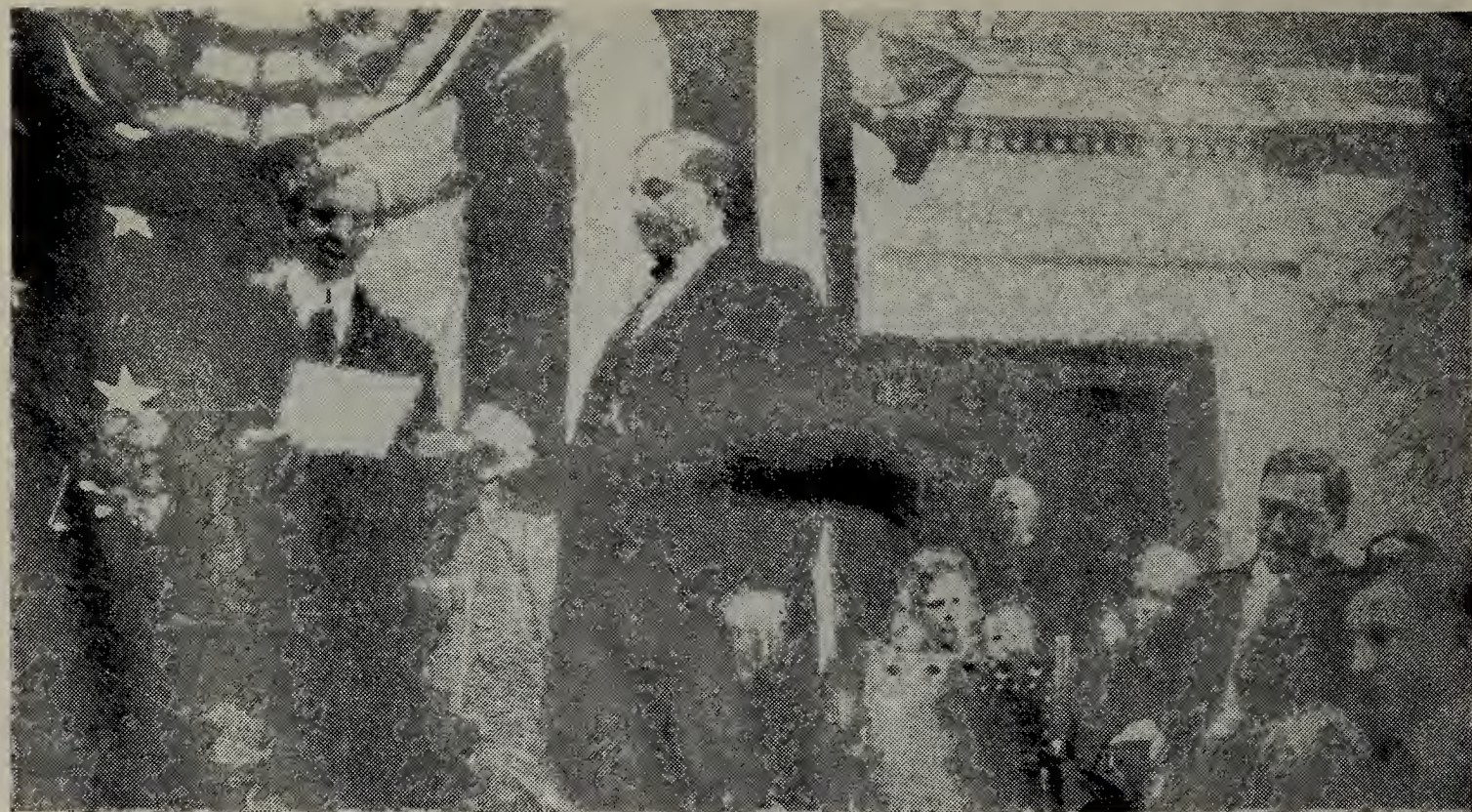






Governor James Edward Ferguson





Governor James E. Ferguson taking the oath of office before Justice Nelson Phillips.



Governor James E. Ferguson and his staff.





The old Ferguson home in Temple, Texas.



The Governor's Mansion, Austin, Texas.





Miriam A. Ferguson, taking the oath of office. Fourth from the left, standing with folded arms, is her husband, James E. Ferguson, affectionately known in Texas as "Governor Jim." To Governor Jim's right are the two Ferguson daughters, son-in-law, George Nalle, and grandson.



LEFT: Governor Miriam A. Ferguson and John Williams, head of Fiesta Association, San Antonio, Texas.



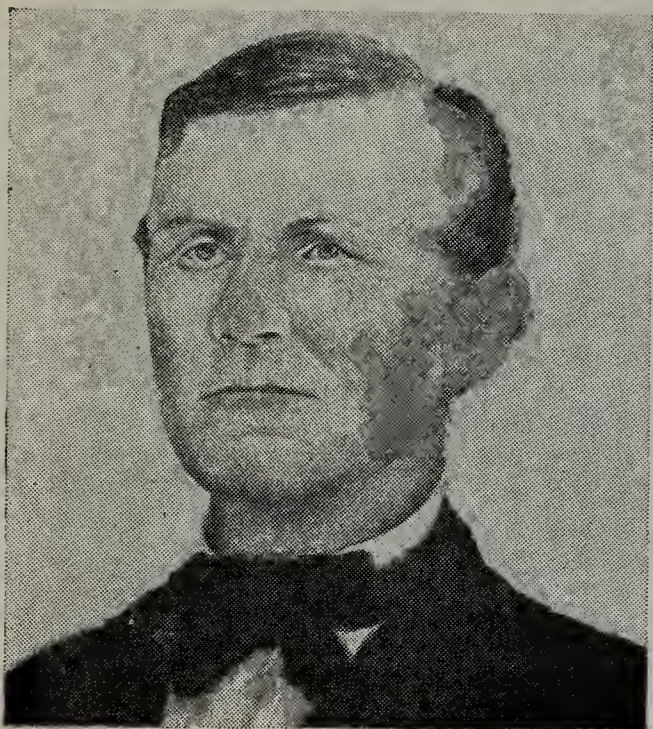
RIGHT: (left to right) Rev. Jos. A. McGuire, V. P., St. Edward's University; Knute Rockne, Coach of Notre Dame; Governor James E. Ferguson; Governor Miriam A. Ferguson; Dr. W. E. Meanwell, Basketball Coach, University of Wisconsin; Jack Meagher, Coach, St. Edward's University. Tuesday, August 11, 1925.



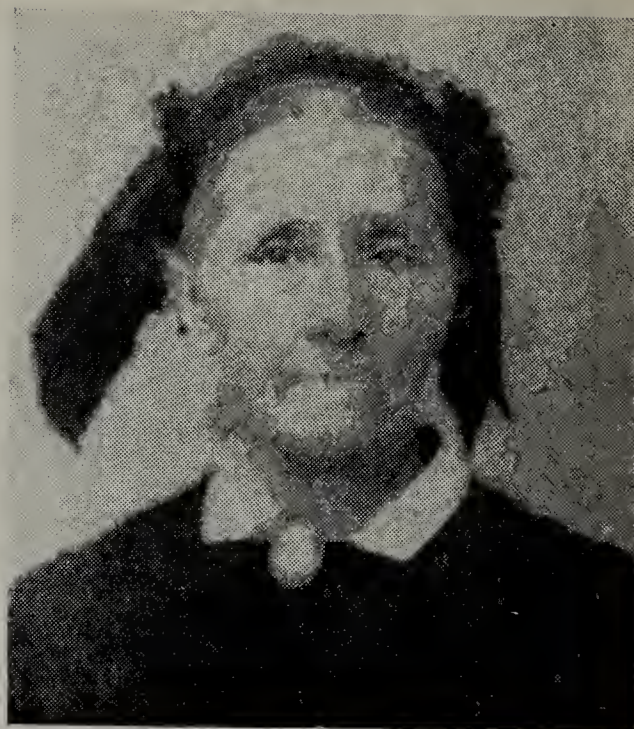


Governor Miriam A. Ferguson at the time of her first inauguration.

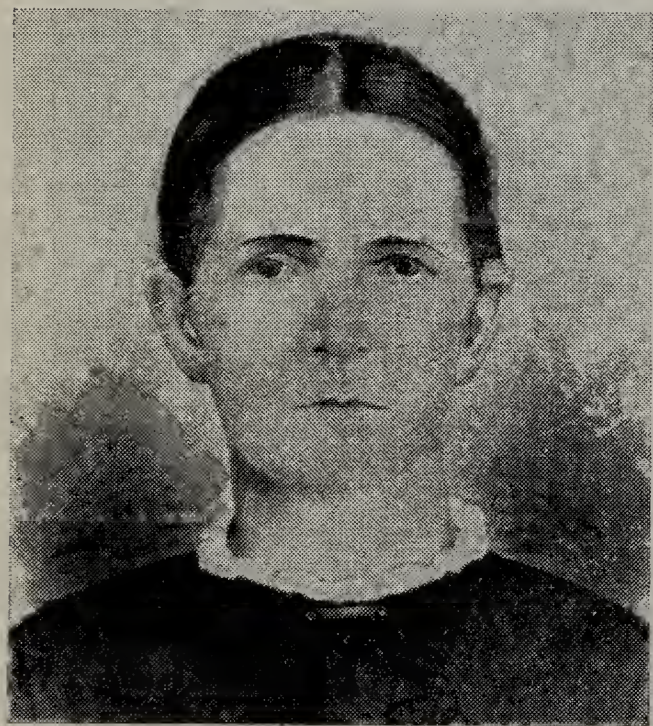




Warner Wallace, the grandfather of  
Miriam A. Wallace Ferguson.



Mrs. Warner Wallace, grandmother of  
Miriam A. Wallace Ferguson.



Mrs. Mitchell Garrison (Miss Ellender  
Toomey), Miriam's grandmother.



Mrs. Joseph L. Wallace, mother of  
Miriam Ferguson.





Miriam A. Ferguson at the age of four.



Miriam A. Ferguson when she was a student at Baylor Female College, Belton, Texas.



James Edward Ferguson when he worked on the railroad.



Miriam A. Ferguson as a young matron of Belton.





"Mother Goose" party at the Governor's Mansion, Sept. 10, 1915, for Dorrace Ferguson.



May Fete of Whitis School, held May 8, 1915 in Harris Grove.





On the pier in Havana, as the Ferguson daughters arrived for the Mardi Gras celebration, 1925. Dorrace, left, was queen of the Mardi Gras. Dorrace Ferguson is now Mrs. Stuart Watt, of Austin. Standing behind Mrs. Nalle is her husband, George S. Nalle.



**LEFT:** Governor Ferguson signs the bill creating the Texas Centennial Exposition, while (left to right) State Senator Margie Neal, Governor Jim, Mrs. O. M. Farusworth of San Antonio, Mrs. Sam J. Smith of Austin, and Mrs. George S. Nalle look on.

**RIGHT:** Dorrace and Ouida Ferguson.





George S. Nalle Jr.'s fifteenth birthday party, 1934, at the Governor's Mansion (tablecloth was made by his great-grandmother Sampson, who was the first bride of the mansion).



Ouida F. Nalle and Governor Jim beside the ruins of Old Salado College.



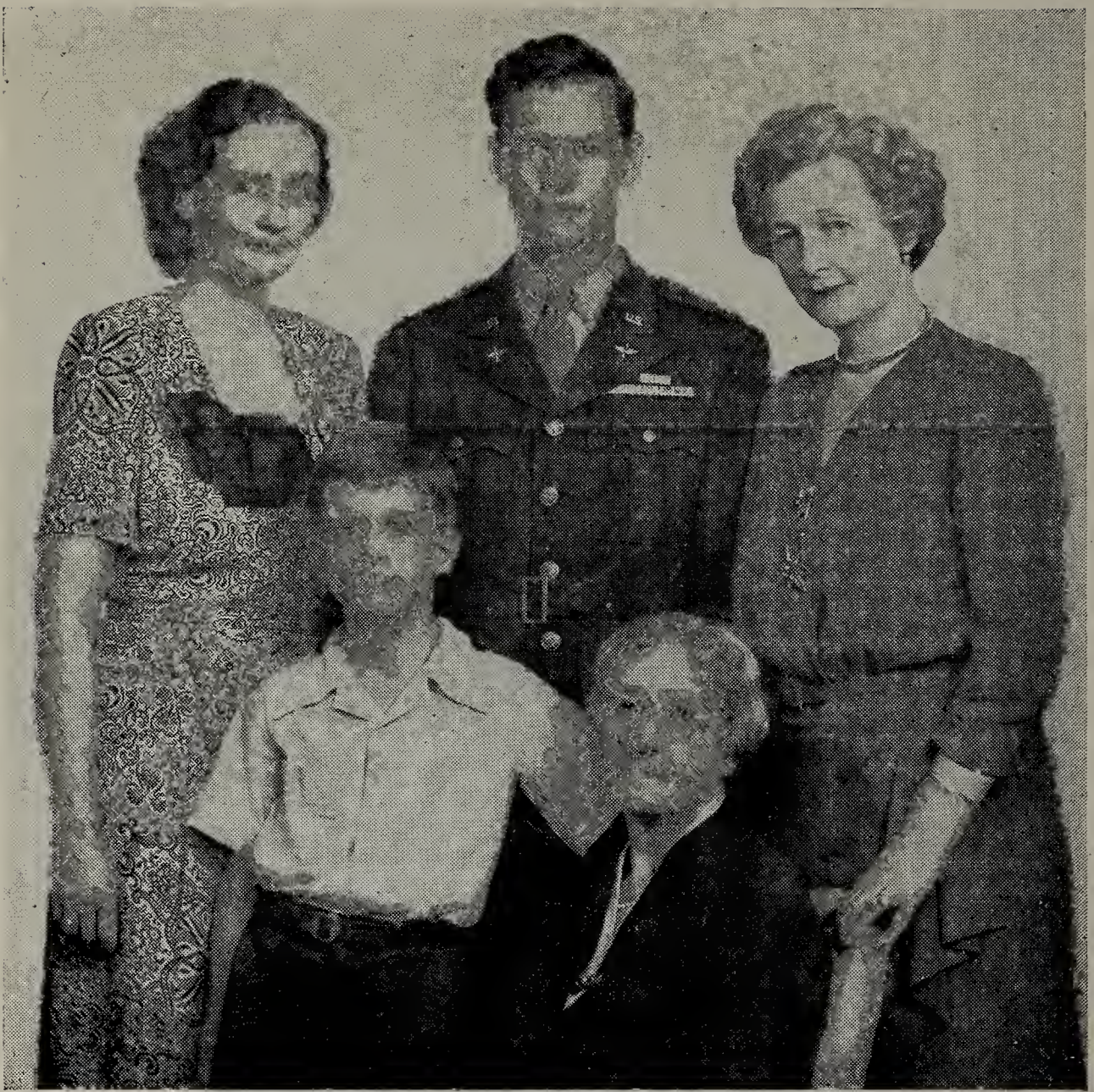


The Governors Ferguson with their grandson,  
George Nalle, Jr., 1938.



Ex-Governor James Edward Ferguson, as he  
campaigned, May 1910.





(Standing, left to right): Mrs. Stuart Watt, George S. Nalle, Jr., Mrs. George S. Nalle. (Seated) Governor Miriam A. Ferguson, with grandson, James Stuart Watt.

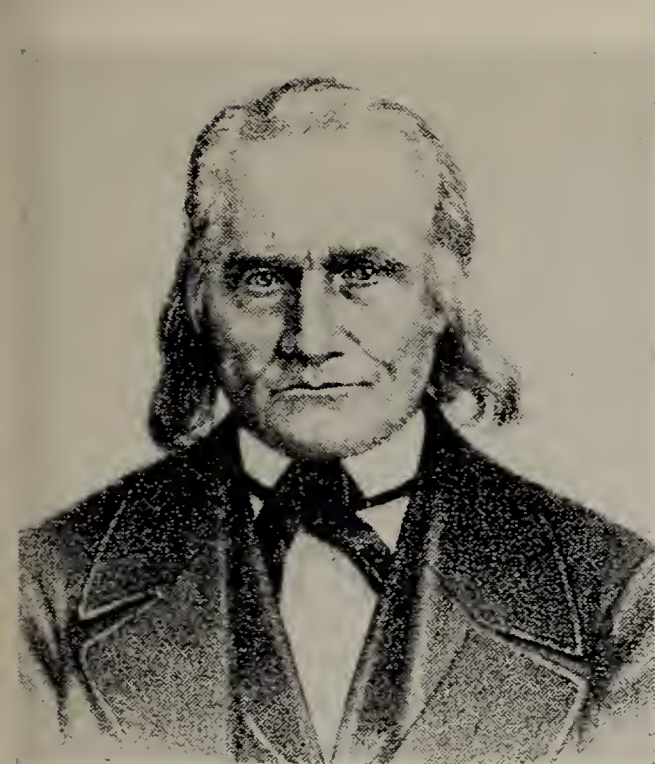


LEFT: The Ferguson family, 1925.



RIGHT: Mrs. Stuart Watt and son, James Stuart Watt.





John A. Lapsley, great-grandfather of Governor Miriam A. Ferguson.



Miriam A. Ferguson, January 1933.



Miriam A. Ferguson, 1925.



The Ferguson team at the opening of the race track in Houston, 1934.



*The Ouida Ferguson.*



Governor Jim, Mrs. Ferguson, Dorrace Ferguson. About 1922.





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## CHAPTER I

# Background

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THE Ferguson saga could begin with a fighting parson, a Virginia lady who killed Indians, a pious Scot who fought for Oliver Cromwell, or the Emperor Charlemagne, who was something of a fighter himself.

The first colonial ancestors of James Edward Ferguson of Texas were John and Sarah Woodson, who arrived in Virginia in 1619, on the ship *George*, of the London Company. John Woodson, a graduate of St. John's, Oxford, became military surgeon for the colony.

In 1644, the Woodsons were living on the bank of the James River. There had been no Indian attacks since the massacre of 1622. On April 28, 1644, while John Woodson was absent on a sick call, the Indians, in a surprise attack, again tried to exterminate the colony.

Sarah Woodson and her two sons, aged ten and twelve, were alone in their plantation cabin. She had come to Virginia classed as a lady, but now she was a pioneer mother, capable of fighting for her brood. Hurriedly, she barred doors and shutters and took down the doctor's musket; she hid one boy under a large wooden washtub and the other one in a "potato hole," a kind of cellar under the floor. When the Indians rushed the house, she fired a single shot and was reloading the gun when she heard the redskins on the roof. They came down the big chimney, but Sarah was ready for them; she swung the crane holding a large kettle of scalding

water under the flue, and armed herself with the iron roasting spit. When the steam and screams subsided, there were two dead Indians. When they failed in opening the door, the others took fright and fled.

Sarah Woodson had saved herself and her sons, but she was a widow. John Woodson had met a volley of poisoned arrows, and had been tomahawked. The colonists, whose humor was grim, called the descendants of Sarah's sons the "Tub" Woodsons and others the "Potato Hole" Woodsons.

The first Ferguson ancestor elected to office in America was Robert Booth, who came from England to York County, Virginia, in 1639, when he was twenty years old. In 1652 he was successively clerk and justice of the court, and a member of the legislative House of Burgesses from 1653 to 1664, when he died while in office. The next politician of note was to come two centuries later.

Robert Booth's daughter, Elizabeth, married Dr. Patrick Napier, who came to Virginia in 1655. Their granddaughter, Frances, married Benjamin Woodson, Sarah Woodson's great-grandson on the "Potato-Hole" side. Through Frances Napier Woodson the Fergusons trace their ancestry to Charles Martel, who was enough of a fighter to stop the Moslem invasion of Europe at Tours in 732. His grandson, Charlemagne, carried the cross with fire and sword from the Atlantic to the Danube, and was enough of a politician to have himself crowned and recognized as Emperor Augustus of the Holy Roman Empire.

A daughter of Benjamin and Frances Napier Woodson married Joseph Fitzpatrick in 1735. One of their grandsons, Alvah Fitzpatrick, of Montgomery, Alabama, was the father of Fannie Phillips Fitzpatrick, who was the mother of James Edward Ferguson. Benjamin Fitzpatrick, an uncle of Fannie Fitzpatrick, was a lawyer of unusual ability. He was twice governor of Alabama, and a United States Senator from that state for sixteen years. He was president *pro tempore* of the Senate during the James Buchanan administration. In 1860 he refused the Democratic nomination for vice president, in which he would have been the running mate of Stephen A. Douglas against Abraham Lincoln. His reason for refusing



was that he foresaw the civil war soon to come. This bit of history is a refutation of the charge brought against one of his blood two centuries later — that no Ferguson ever refused a nomination for public office. Senator Fitzpatrick's niece, Fannie, married James Eldridge Ferguson, a Methodist circuit rider, who turned out to be a fighting parson in Texas.

The Ferguson line descends from William Ferguson, called "Old Squire." He fled from Scotland with his three brothers after the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658. His father, Alpha Ferguson, was killed and his property confiscated by the Crown. Three other brothers who had fought on the side of the king remained in Scotland. A tattered Bible once carried by Old Squire Ferguson in the Cromwell campaigns is a precious possession of the Fergusons of Texas.

By 1758 the Fergusons were in South Carolina. They fought in the Revolutionary War. They moved from the Spartan District in South Carolina to Lawrence County, Alabama. Here, on February 11, 1824, James Eldridge Ferguson was born. Before he was twenty-one years old, he went to the new Republic of Texas to preach to the Indians. His mission territory extended from the Red River to Victoria, Texas, which was an area larger than all New England. In pioneer America, godliness and adventure often rode the same horse westward.

Later, as pastor of the Methodist Episcopal church in Houston, Parson Ferguson officiated at the marriage of the parents of the late Colonel Edward M. House, who was an important figure in the Wilson administration during the first World War. The House family was quite wealthy. Joe Lee Ferguson, a brother of James E. Ferguson, relates that his father, the Parson, often remarked: "The largest fee I ever received for marrying a couple was given me by Mr. House; the smallest was a pair of hound pups."

When Texas seceded, Parson Ferguson immediately joined in the scrap. Later, he became captain of a company called the "Victoria Cavalry." On March 8, 1862, he issued the following call to arms:\*

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\* Reprinted in the *Victoria Advocate* of September 28, 1934.



MEN OF TEXAS! I call you to the rescue of our sacred rights, so endangered by our last defeats in Kentucky. Old Tennessee lies at the mercy of the abolition horde. I wish to raise a company of mounted men, to serve as Mounted Artillery, with the famous Carter Guns, now being made at a point accessible to Texas. We have the promise of the guns by the 1st of April. This is the most distinguished arm of the service, and exempt from camp duty. Fifty dollars bounty will be paid when we are mustered into service, and fifty dollars more will be allowed for clothes, etc. This call is made to fill up the 15 regiments called for by the Governor.

Report to me singly, or in squads at Victoria, or to Nat T. Gaines, where provisions will be made to those who desire it, until we are organized and sworn in, which will be at such place as the Governor may appoint. Only 25 days are left you to report in, then comes the draft, which no man of honor will stand. Come with good horse and the best arms you can get. Double barrel shot guns preferred and six-shooters. We are also in negotiation for swords. Come without delay.

J. E. FERGUSON

VICTORIA, March 8, 1862

The cavalry company that this call recruited joined a regiment bound for Arkansas. When Arkansas Post fell in 1863, James Eldridge Ferguson was captured and made a prisoner of war. Soon after his capture he, with several of his friends, found their guard asleep and made their escape. By a stroke of luck he was able to find his own horse and saddle on which to get away. By riding day and night, with only occasional stops to rest his faithful mount, he reached Victoria, Texas, in less than a month. His good horse, "Van," lived for a number of years after the war, and was fed, treated and cared for as a member of the family.

James Eldridge Ferguson believed strongly in the Confederate cause, but he was opposed to slavery. This is evidenced by the fact that his father had set the family slaves

free years before the war. To the parson, slavery was not the real issue, but was used as a great moral smoke screen by the North to gain popular appeal. He believed that the underlying cause lay in the fact that the South held the cotton market of the world, and would, eventually, supplant the North in the financial world. As he saw it, the war was an attempt to bankrupt the South, rather than to abolish slavery. In common with every true Southerner, he resented the exploitation of the Southland by the North; he was convinced that freedom of the slaves could have been accomplished in such a way that the South could have been saved from bankruptcy. Because of this resentment, many people believed the United States would be a divided nation forever.

There is no record available of the further service of James E. Ferguson after his return to Victoria, Texas, in 1863. That he remained a loyal patriot to the South is confirmed by a letter written by him in 1865 to his brother, Wesley Ferguson, who was a Union sympathizer. He wrote:

VICTORIA, January 6, 1865

WESLEY, I suppose I need not call you Dear Brother any more, tho' we drew at the same breast and were nursed on the same father's knee. I have always tried to do a brother's part by you. But since you think "*I ought to be killed*" and "*Will be killed,*" I cannot feel any but a betrayal kiss when you call me "Dear Brother." If I am killed, I will not be first of the name and blood, that have died by the bloody hands of Traitors and Tories. I have heard Grandmother Ferguson, and Father and Uncle Billy Saunders often tell the story, how my Grandfather William Ferguson was followed home from the glorious fields of "Ninety-Six," the last battle of the revolution, by those damn thieving traitorous tories, and murdered in his own house before his wife and children; and our father remembered how, when the sun rose his father lay dying on the floor of his own house and the shrieks and cries of his widowed mother, and the wail of his orphaned brothers and sisters over his dying father went down deep in his infant soul and gave him a life long hatred of Tories and traitors to their own country, and he gave me his spirit,



and I glory in it. But there was a traitor brother of his, Col. James Ferguson, who was killed at the battle of Rocky Mount with Col. Sumpter, he was a brother of four brothers that nobly died for their country. I may be killed; be it so, I will leave to my sons a name unstained by treason of words or actions; the soil that drinks up my blood shall know I shed it in its defense. The living shall remember that I did not *carp*, and *crook* and *whine* about the evils incident to a just war for independence, but gave my voice, my hand, my purse, and my heart, and if needed my blood for the common weal, the common good.

Let this be the end; I burn your letters for fear they will fall into other hands, and be the means of giving you great trouble. No worse — you appear to be set in your way — the world is wide — name not my name to your children, and I will let yours sleep in silence with mine.

Our father was true as steel to his country, went and served two years 1812 to 1814 and left mother in a strange land and she of the same spirit ploughed and hoed and spun in hope, and with the proud thought as I have often heard her say that husband and the father of her children was true to his country. But go thou wayward son, who it appears inherited neither the spirit of father or mother, but whose heart appears to be filled with so foul a spirit as to desire the death of a brother, whose only crime is devotion to the rights of his own native land inherited from the blood and treasure of his forefathers, and God grant you repentance unto life. Save us both from a coward's name and from a sinner's hell by His great mercy in Christ.

JAMES

In 1867 Parson Ferguson and his family moved to Bell County, Texas, where they bought a small farm located on the banks of Salado Creek, near the village of Salado. On this property was a historic mill, built in 1849 by two brothers, Ira and Whitfield Chalk. This was the first of six mills to be built within nine miles along the fast-flowing waters of Salado Creek. Falling 120 feet in the nine miles, this might well be called the millstream of Texas.

It was here on this stream that the parson settled with

his wife Fanny, and three children, to take up the duties of a circuit-riding Methodist preacher for the district. In addition to his ministerial duties he used the mill to grind the rich, yellow corn of fertile Bell County for himself and his neighbors. As time went on, Fanny and her sons took over the management and work of the farm, while the parson devoted his entire time to his mission work. Later, he further relieved himself of business responsibilities by selling a half interest in the mill to Ed Reid.

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## CHAPTER II

### Jim Is Born

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A SCREAM rang out along Salado Creek on the last day of August 1871. The family story is that a field hand picking cotton nearby said to the picker just ahead of him:

“Wha’s dat? . . . Pahson Ferguson’s wife mus’ be havin’ anoder baby.”

It was true. On September 11, Parson Ferguson, then forty-seven years old, penned this letter to a brother clergyman:

DEAR REVEREND THOMAS:

You will know from this we are all well. Fanny was delivered of a fine boy August 31st, weight 13 pounds; very good-looking, like his pa; call him James Edward, so we will have J. E. Ferguson, Jr. . . .

Fanny Ferguson had already given birth to five children: Alvah, Kate, Joe Lee, and two babies that died in infancy. Fanny was only thirty-two years old, fifteen years her husband’s junior.

The day following Jim Ferguson’s birth his father, the parson, arose in the Methodist conference then being held at Salado, and told the brethren of the birth of his new son. He said:

“We have named him Jim. He weighs thirteen pounds, and some day, he will be governor of Texas.”



The Ferguson family told the story so often that it may have given Jim the idea of being governor of his state.

Some ministers seem to have a conception of the Heavenly Father as a stern master, and are themselves inclined to be selfish, and a bit strict and overbearing with their families. If one is to judge from stories told in the family, Old Parson Ferguson was of that type. The little money he collected was generally spent on "Poor Brother This," or "Poor Brother That," or the "Other," who, he decided, needed it more than did Fanny and the children. The family was as poor as the proverbial "Job's turkey." Fanny had only the bare necessities of life, but she never complained. Indeed, she was with the majority, since the country was full of poor people. She took care of the children, saw that the Negroes worked on the farm of one hundred and sixty acres, and managed the grist mill.

As for the parson, he went over the country saving souls, only returning often enough to keep Fanny with child. He was respected for his indomitable fighting spirit, and was called "The Fighting Parson." He once challenged a man who heckled him while he was preaching and said: "I can fight as well as preach, and if you will wait until I finish this sermon, I'll attend to you next."

Parson Ferguson left this legacy of a militant spirit to his children. It was often more intelligent to be neutral on a subject, but no Ferguson ever showed that much cleverness. The Fergusons always took sides, fighting like Kilkenny cats for their side of the question. They were never shrewd enough to straddle the fence. They always had an opinion, and never failing to express it was a family curse.

Jim Ferguson was Fanny's sixth child, but not her last one, for when he was about three years old, along came another son, named Alexander.

Although James Edward was only four-and-a-half years old when his father died, he never forgot his father's funeral. The long wait while the neighbors came in and built the pine casket in the front yard made a profound impression on the boy. He remembered how they covered the coffin with a black material and lined the inside with white after they had finished the sawing and hammering. He never

knew whether a ready-made casket was not available, or whether the family was too poor to buy one.

It was just two hundred and fifty-one years after Sarah Woodson was left a widow in Virginia, to hew out a livelihood for herself and her two sons, that her granddaughter, seven generations later, was left a widow in the wilds of Texas with the same problem. But Sarah Woodson had had only two sons to rear, while Fanny Ferguson had five children to feed, clothe and educate. How well she succeeded is told in the lives of her descendants.

A year or so before the parson died a flood had destroyed the dam that gave power to the mill on Salado Creek. The parson had said to his congregation on the Sunday following its destruction: "I'm not worth a dam!"

Ed Reid was a partner in the dam that washed away. When Parson Ferguson proposed building a dam of concave shape arching upstream, a principle used in the great present-day dams, Reid scoffed: "You're crazy! I'll have nothing to do with this harebrained scheme. The idea of a dam arching upstream, against the current!" So, Reid stepped out of the venture. The new dam had been completed according to the parson's radical idea of proper dam construction, and for a year prior to his death the family enjoyed a good milling business.

Reid watched all this with envy. When the parson died, he thought he saw his chance to regain ownership in the mill. On a legal flaw in the release he had given on the property, he entered claim against the widow Ferguson for an interest in the mill.

Fast-traveling "grapevine" telegraph informed Fanny that Reid was on his way to her house, bringing a writ of sequestration to claim an interest in her mill. She sounded an alarm. The Ferguson clan in the county assembled en masse. Jim Ferguson was only six years old, but he remembered and recounted the excitement.

"I remember how Big Joe Ferguson, our cousin, came armed to the teeth, and when Ed Reid arrived it looked as though there was sure to be a shooting scrape. Reid had two of his friends with him; they got off their horses and started to come in the house. My mother told them not to come in,



and when they saw Big Joe they quickly assumed a more conciliatory attitude."

As Reid and his friends rode off, Alvah, Jim's older brother, and his friend, John Freeman, ran for their horses. At breakneck speed they took a short cut to Belton, the county seat. Reaching there much ahead of Ed Reid, they found their attorney, Judge X. B. Saunders, and, through proper legal channels, prevented Reid from getting possession of the mill. Alvah was made receiver, and after long litigation the Fergusons won the case. During the months of court wrangling the widow Ferguson took her flock of young ones and lived and slept in the mill. By day and by night she guarded their small inheritance.

The Ferguson mill on Salado Creek was the first rock mill in that part of Texas. People came from fifty to seventy-five miles away to have corn ground. "Going to mill" was quite a holiday. Farmers pitched their tents along Salado Creek and fished while they waited their turn to have corn ground. Community gossip, politics and religion were freely discussed. To all this talk, young Jim was an interested listener.

One day a Mr. Whitely brought a kind of grain to be milled that was new to young Jim Ferguson. The youngster had never before seen wheat; he watched with keen interest while it was being ground. This new meal they called "flour" so intrigued the boy that he followed Mr. Whitely to his tent on the creek to see what he was going to do with it. As Whitely made hoecakes with the flour, he saw Jim watching with longing eyes and said:

"I'll give you some of this flour, Sonny." Jim ran for a sack, and Whitely gave him about ten pounds of the treasure. For several days he hid it in a bureau drawer.

One day, Tom Deen, a neighbor, brought Jim's mother a bucket of open kettle molasses. Jim brought out his precious flour and his mother made biscuits. The family cow furnished butter, and they all feasted on white bread, butter and molasses. Jim knew he had struck a bonanza! Never had he tasted such food! It was a treat fit for a king.

Jim Ferguson spent the first years of his life playing, working, hunting, fishing and swimming in the "Old Blue

Water Hole" of Salado Creek, in Bell County. In a log schoolhouse he studied Webster's old *Blue-back Speller*, McGuffey's *Readers* and Ray's *Arithmetic*.

He first saw a railroad train at Taylor, Texas, when he was eight years old. The railroad had not then been built so far as Belton, and all freight was brought by wagon from Taylor. Jim rode on a wagon with his brother Alvah to see the "steam train."

The railroad and train were not the only new sights in the city of Taylor, for it was there that Jim saw his first cocoanut; he bought it for ten cents because they told him it was good to eat. Finding it a delectable morsel, he ate the meat and also drank the milk. That night, going home with a load of lumber, the boys stopped and slept on the banks of the San Gabriel River under a wagon sheet. Here, the cocoanut began to punish Jim's stomach with a holy vengeance. In after years the sight of a cocoanut brought to his mind painful recollections.

In 1883 Jim Ferguson entered Salado College, one of the oldest schools in Texas. It was established in 1859 by a small group of Bell County citizens who met in a tent at Salado Springs and formed a corporation known as "Salado College Joint Stock Company." From this humble beginning Salado College came to be known as "The Athens of Texas." Here, Jim Ferguson spent four profitable years. He read Caesar, Cicero and Virgil; he studied Hart's *Rhetoric* and Green's *Short History of the English People*. He also did some work in Greek, and had almost completed algebra when an incident occurred which caused a great change in his life.

One day in 1887, R. B. Halley, Jr., one of the teachers in the college, told Jim, now a big, husky lad of sixteen, to cut and bring in some wood for the fire. There had been considerable discussion on the playground about students doing that chore, since the families of the pupils paid the college so much each month for the cutting of wood and the tending of fires. Will Hair, a student five years Jim's senior, led the mutiny, with Jim a strong second. The two boys flatly refused to cut and bring in firewood; for this both boys were expelled. On account of Jim's age he was



told he could come back to school if he would apologize. He was content to stand by his friend and leave matters as they were — typical of a stubborn Ferguson.

At this period in Jim's life the usual idea held of a minister's son manifested itself in many ways. He was full of pranks. There was the instance of Laura Johnson, an old colored woman, who, with her husband, Vince, and their son, Bud, worked on the Ferguson farm from the time Jim was fifteen years old until Vince's death in 1899. "Aunt Laura" told the story:

"Lawzy me, Mista Jim was always into some kind ob debilment when he wah a boy. He wah not what you would call a bad boy, no suh; but he wah always up to pranks. One night Vince an' me wah a-settin' by de fiah tryin' to read de Bible. Neader one ob us knowed much 'bout readin', but we wah makin' out all right when we hyars a knock at de doah.

" 'Who dat?' I say, an' opened de doah, an' who wah standin' dere but Mista Jim. He say:

" 'Just thought I'd come down and talk over the spring planting with you and Vince this evening.'

"Well, Mista Jim stay quite some time wid us an' we talk 'bout lotsa things. Once, while he wah dere we hyar de dogs jes a-barkin' an' a-barkin'! But we paid no 'tension. Nex' mawnin' when we went to turn de chickens out we larned what dem dogs wah barkin' at de night befoah. 'Cause while Mista Jim wah a-talkin' wid us in de cabin, his boy frends, dey ben a-gittin' our chickens. Dey tuk dem chickens down on de bank ob de creek an' killed an' cooked 'um, an' et um dat very night at dere dead supper. An' half dem chickens berlong to his mammy, an' when we done tol' her what dem boys dey done done, she jes say: 'All boys must have their little pranks; Jim'll turn out all right.' An' I guess she wah right, 'cause he sho did turn out to be one good man."

Shortly after the chicken episode, Jim Ferguson had his first love affair. At this tender age the young swain fell in love with a girl many years his senior. Her name was Belle. She was very pretty and extremely religious. She was not in

love with Jim, nor, perhaps, did she know of his puppy love for her.

A circuit-riding Methodist preacher was holding a camp meeting near by, and Belle was helping the preacher save the souls of everybody far and near. Jim attended all of the services, because there he could feast his eyes on Belle, his angel, dressed in her best bib and tucker.

One night his angel descended upon Jim, intent on converting him. She sat beside him, put her arm around him and asked him if he didn't want to be saved for Jesus. Jim gulped a time or two and said "Yes." Belle took him down front to the mourner's bench, and he thought he had religion. Two weeks after the camp meeting was over Belle married somebody else. Jim lost his religion. He reckoned he had wanted to be saved for Belle.



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## CHAPTER III

# Young Man Goes West

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THE pioneer urge was pushing Jim Ferguson to move on; the West was calling. He had lived all of sixteen years in Bell County, Texas! It was time to make a change, so, without imparting his thoughts and ideas to any of his family, he disappeared. For almost two years, neither family nor friends had the remotest idea where he was.

Jim washed dishes for his meals in restaurants, and did odd jobs for cash on which to push westward. In Colorado and Nevada, he worked as a laborer in the mines. He worked his way to California. As he often expressed it later: "It is easier to tell what I didn't do than to tell what I did." This experience gave Jim Ferguson an insight into psychology which proved of untold value. It was literally his "University of Hard Knocks."

In Denver, he was a bellhop at the Windsor Hotel, and this job had material influence on his future; there, he waited on Governor Tabor and overheard many political conferences.

Although Jim had thought of studying law, he had never considered a political career. However, politics fascinated him from that time on. Governor Tabor was much in the limelight. He had built the famous Tabor Opera House in Denver, then a pride of the West.

Colorado did not satisfy Jim's desire to see the world. He had to see California, "The Golden." In the Sierras of California he worked as helper in the placer mines. Even-

tually, he reached the Pacific Coast, where he spent more than a year; in turn, he was a laborer in the vineyards, a roustabout in a barbed-wire factory in San Francisco, and a teamster on the largest grain ranch in the world.

By tramp steamer he pushed north into Washington Territory, where he was a laborer in a lumber camp; he was up at four in the morning to harness mules and to spend the remainder of the day at hard labor. All this heavy work developed the boy physically; he was always strong and healthy.

After almost two years Jim decided that he had seen enough of the world, and was ready to return home to Texas. By chance, he got a job with a bridge gang, and, for a time, worked on construction of railroad bridges. Work on the Pecos River bridge on the Southern Pacific in Texas, the second tallest railroad bridge in the world, was one of his jobs on his way home.

As unceremoniously as he had departed, he appeared one day at his mother's home in Bell County. The prodigal, weary, but travel-wise, was welcomed with open arms by family and friends. For some time his tall tales of the West held the interest of the neighborhood.

Jim's next job was with another railroad bridge gang. While working on the New Braunfels bridge on the International and Great Northern Railroad, he lost his balance and fell from the top of the bridge, but managed to stop his fall by catching the superstructure with his right hand. By one arm he dangled in mid-air until the crew could let him down with ropes. The weight of his body wrenched his shoulder out of place. Afterward, a sudden lift of his arm overhead would always dislocate his shoulder, and he would faint dead away from his pain. Unless some member of his family who knew how to pull his arm so that the shoulder would go back into place was handy, he had first to be revived, and then ask someone to pull his arm. This produced some funny situations.

Years after the bridge accident, Jim Ferguson was in a trial at Waco. He was sitting beside his client when a witness on the other side left the stand, pulled out a gun, and shot Jim's client. In the melee Jim threw up his arm, and



out of place went the shoulder! He fainted. When he came to, like the corpse who sat at the wake, he was alone in the room. His face distorted by pain, he hurried out, clutching the dislocated arm. To the first man he met in the hall he cried: "Please! Pull my arm!"

The cautious citizen refused, stammering, "Oh, no! I'll not touch you! I don't want to get mixed up in this. You are shot!"

Those years of bridge building and other jobs on the railroad instilled into Jim Ferguson a keen feeling of sympathy and understanding for the men who operate the railroads. He never knelt beside a bed at night to pray, but Jim Ferguson always walked out of the house and looked up into the heavens just before retiring. Unless the night was cold and rainy, it was always a silent prayer. If the weather was bad, he never failed to say, in supplication:

"God help the poor devil who walks the rails and throws the switches tonight." He seemed to want to look God in the eye when he prayed.

Jim Ferguson worked as a laborer, and, later, as a foreman on a pile-driving train on the Missouri - Kansas and Texas Railroad; for a short time he was a fireman on the Katy out of Denison.

One day, on a pile-driving train, he came into McKinney, in Collin County, in northeast Texas. With money in his pocket, Jim strode up the main street. As he passed a dry goods store, he spied a fine leather trunk on the sidewalk. He stopped. He couldn't resist that trunk. As soon as it was paid for, he realized that he had no use for the trunk, and that if he took it back to the train he would be hurrahed about it. Yet he was stuck with it!

Jim proceeded to make further inroads on his monthly pay; he bought enough cold bottles to fill the trunk. When he and his new trunk arrived in a spring wagon at the boarding car on the Katy siding, a shout of derision went up; but when he opened his treasure chest and said: "Help yourself, boys," he became the hero of the day. Years afterward, in political campaigns, he would always recount the trunk episode when he spoke in McKinney.

Jim must have concluded that his chance of becoming a

railroad president was slim, or else that it was time for him to make another change, for, in 1895, he quit the railroad and returned to the family home in Bell County.

One day, soon after his homecoming, he wrote the words "Law by God" on the wall of his room and set out on horseback for Belton, nine miles away, to arrange to borrow some law books. "Law by God" remained on that wall until the old house was washed away by a flood on September 11, 1921.

In the daytime Jim farmed, and at night he read law. In the "Salado Debating Society," Jim was a fiery orator; his trenchant arguments often brought him near to blows with his friend, Huling P. Robertson. Huling took his debating seriously, and Jim pulled no punches in debate. Among the older men in the group were Robertson, Charlie Dickenson, Mac. T. Bush and Ed Stinnett; among the young spuds were Jim Ferguson and Merritt Walker. E. A. Berry was judge of all debates in the society, and the club could boast of some very good speakers.

The subject of one debate was: "*Resolved*, That Civilization is on the Increase." W. A. Davis, one of the older members, and a very pious man, was speaking for the affirmative. At great length he described how wild and savage humanity had been in the past, and how much better it had grown through the ages. He cited Solomon with his hundreds of concubines, and declared: "The man of today, with one wife, is a far better citizen than the licentious polygamist of yesteryears."

This was too much for Huling Robertson, who was nervously waiting to argue for the negative. At the top of his voice he broke in:

"Hell! That's not so! There are forty thousand prostitutes in Chicago alone."

This brazen statement threw the sedate Society, and the community, as well, into hot debate over the number of prostitutes in Chicago — a question that was not settled until a letter of inquiry had been written to that city. The answer was a great blow to Mr. Davis.

Political debates at that time claimed the interest of all



the people of Texas. They would go for miles to hear a good debate.

"Aunt Laura" Johnson, the old colored woman on the Ferguson farm, told many times of "Mista Jim when he was larnin' dat law."

"He practice speakin' to de jury all de time. On de banks ob Salado Crick, not very far frum de house, dar was a bunch ob little trees dat he called de jury. Ovah to one side he had a lone tree dat he called de Judge. By de hour he'd argur an' preach to dem trees 'bout how innocent his clients was. . . ."

In 1897, feeling that he was sufficiently prepared to pass the bar examination, Jim asked Judge John Furman, of Belton, to appoint a committee to examine him. This was the regular procedure at that time for those wishing to be admitted to the bar in Texas.

Acting as chairman of the board, Judge Furman appointed three other attorneys to serve with him: W. E. Roseborough, a devout Baptist, who had been a lifelong friend of Parson Ferguson's; J. D. McMahan, and Judge X. B. Saunders, also an old friend of the Parson's.

Seated with these illustrious barristers around a large table in the courthouse in Belton, in fear and trembling Jim faced the great task before him. The first to speak was Judge Saunders:

"Mr. Ferguson," he began formally, "there is one thing I must ask you in the beginning."

"Yes, sir," said the candidate, much alarmed at his manner.

"Have you any money on you?" the Judge asked.

"I have a dollar and four bits, sir," Jim answered.

"Well," said the Judge, "that will buy a quart of 'Four Roses.' " Jim ordered the whisky.

Roseborough objected that he wanted to examine the candidate. Jim sat by, quaking in his boots, not knowing what was coming next. Judge Saunders was equally grave:

"Gentlemen," he said, "are you so unappreciative of an old friend as to desire to subject his son to grueling questions?"

The whisky arrived. Judge Saunders poured a drink around and continued:

"This boy's father, Parson Ferguson, was the best friend the young lawyers of Bell County ever had. I move you, gentlemen, that his son Jim be given a license to practice law in Texas."

Roseborough refused the drink.

"I could not get along with my conscience if I didn't ask him at least one legal question," he demurred.

"There you go with your conscience!" McMahan snorted. "Suppose Jim couldn't answer the question; how could you get along with your conscience if you turned down Parson Ferguson's son? I will agree to your asking him just one question, with the distinct understanding that he does not have to answer it if he doesn't want to!"

So ended the examination, and Jim was admitted to the bar without being asked a question.

Jim remarked later: "It's not as bad as it sounds, for a lawyer is not like a doctor. When a lawyer starts to practice law, he is really just beginning to learn, regardless of his training. He has other lawyers and the judge to correct his mistakes. If a doctor doesn't know what he is about, he has only the undertaker to cover up his mistakes.

"A green lawyer can't do anybody much harm. If he doesn't work and gain an adequate knowledge of the law, nobody will hire him. If he is to make a living, he must know something about the law. So, by the law of survival and in the nature of things, he can't harm society to any great extent."

In Jim Ferguson's opinion, often expressed, "There is no efficacy in working youngsters to death making them learn the answers to questions that the boys or the professors who asked them can't answer three weeks later. Just turn 'em loose, and if they are lawyers, it will soon show up in their success."

In 1897, Jim Ferguson opened a law office in Belton, Texas. His success from the beginning was proof to support his views of the way to make a lawyer.



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## CHAPTER IV

### Miriam's Family

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SOME six or seven miles southeast of the Ferguson farm in Bell County lived a family named Wallace. Like the Fergusons, they could boast of descent from Charlemagne.

In the year 1704, Lady Mary Campbell, of the Scottish Clan Campbell of Argyllshire, married Michael Woods, who was born in the North of Ireland in 1680. The proud Campbells' descent from the Emperor Charlemagne is long established. With her marriage to Michael Woods, Lady Mary Campbell became plain Mary Woods. She said, as Ruth said to her mother-in-law, Naomi:

*Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried.*

Relinquishing title and forsaking family, she cast her lot with her husband. In 1720, with their eight children, they emigrated to America.

The records of Virginia show that Michael Woods, Sr., and his son-in-law, William Wallace, in 1737 were granted several thousand acres of land on Mechum's River, Beaver Creek and Ivy Creek. On the river, Michael Woods built his home, known first as "Mountain Plains," and later, as "Blair Park"; it was quite a pretentious structure for that day.

Warner Wallace, great-great grandson of Michael Woods, Sr., with his wife, Miriam McKee Lapsley, came to the Lone Star State from Kentucky in the last days of the Republic of Texas (1845). They stopped first in East Texas and finally bought land and settled in Bell County. Among their seven children brought to Texas was Joseph Lapsley Wallace, born July 11, 1833, in Kentucky.

On the banks of Little River, in Bell County, between seven and eight miles southeast of Belton, Warner Wallace built a log house. During the terrible war years, while his sons were in the Confederate Army, Warner Wallace worked early and late to keep the farm going. At the close of the war Joseph Lapsley Wallace returned and bought the farm from his father. The entire family continued to live together in the log house.

On July 4, 1869, Joseph L. Wallace married Eliza Garrison Ferguson, widow of Wesley Ferguson, whose death had occurred several years before. It was to his brother Wesley that James Eldridge Ferguson had written the vitriolic letter denouncing his Union sympathies. \*

Eliza Garrison was born in Panola County, in East Texas, in 1840. Her father, Mitchell Garrison, a captain in the Texas army in 1836, had been marching his company to join Sam Houston at San Jacinto when a courier met them with news of the victory that won Texas independence.

Mitchell Garrison's wife, Eliza's mother, was Ellender Toomey, a woman of a stern and positive nature. In the early spring of 1855, Ellender stood in the door of their small house and watched her husband, now past fifty, rope a young horse that had never been bridled or saddled. After snubbing a hackamore over the colt's nose, he mounted it bareback. Instead of breaking for open country as a wild horse usually does, this mustang headed for the house; it pitched its rider onto the picket fence, impaling him on it.

Ellender and her children finally managed to lift Garrison off the fence; one of the pickets was buried deep in the fleshy part of his thigh. Ellender treated the deep wound as best she could. It refused to heal. Something had to be

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\* See Page 5



done for the suffering man "before mortification set in." His pain was so excruciating that he must be taken to San Antonio, since there was no surgeon nearer. This presented a great problem. Ellender Garrison bought an old hack from a neighbor, and where the back seat had been, she made a bed for her husband.

The next question was where to get a driver for the hack. Ellender could not leave the farm, the store, and the small children. Susan Nancy, a grown young daughter, volunteered. She had never been to San Antonio, but she suggested: "Let's take along the big wagon and two pairs of extra horses, so that when Father is well we can drive on to Galveston and buy supplies for the store." Her mother thought it was a good idea, for one never said "die" in that family.

It must have been a sad parting for Ellender that early morning, for she realized the hazards that faced the girl and her father. In a belt fastened securely around her waist under her full skirt of homespun, Susan Nancy concealed the family gold pieces.

It was July. Susan Nancy wore a sunbonnet to protect her from the broiling sun, but, in a bandbox, she carried her one and only hat to wear when she reached the city. It must have been quite a caravan for one girl to manage, driving two horses to the hack, with the wagon hitched behind and the four spare horses tied on behind the wagon. At nightfall, she would disconnect the wagon from the hack, park the hack alongside the wagon, and cook supper. In the wagon was feed for the horses, and on top of the feed, she made her bed. In this fashion they camped by the roadside every night. Susan Nancy cooked all the food they ate, and fed and watered the horses. It took more than two weeks to make the tedious hundred and fifty miles to San Antonio. The father could do little to help. Hers was a man's job. If Indians had appeared, he had his rifle, but . . . .

After several weeks of medical treatment in San Antonio, it was finally decided that Mitchell Garrison's leg would have to be amputated. The infection was too deep-seated to heal.

What would Mother think? What if the operation was not a success? Can I take the responsibility? Susan Nancy asked herself these questions.

The thought of returning with him, minus one leg, was bad enough, but the thought of returning without him . . . . She could not make the decision. "He must decide for himself," she told the doctors.

When the surgeon told Mitchell Garrison that amputation alone would save his life, if it could be saved, he replied: "If it is the only way, the sooner the better, for I must get on to Galveston."

Early the next morning the leg was amputated. It was August now, and the weather was sizzling hot. On August 5, Susan Nancy buried her father in San Antonio.

As she turned away from that new grave, she faced another problem: to return home alone with the hack, the wagon and three teams was out of the question. The word of her plight spread through the town of San Antonio. A family offered to accompany her as far as Austin, where it would be much easier to find people going to Bell County. From Austin, about seventy miles from home, Susan Nancy sent a letter to her mother by a man who was going on horseback to a farm near Georgetown, which was about halfway. He agreed to take the letter and to have it passed on from farm to farm until it should reach the Widow Garrison. That was Central Texas in 1855! As soon as the news came to Ellender, she sent relatives to help Susan Nancy home with the caravan.

Courageously, Ellender took up the tasks of both mother and father. Some years the crops were short and she had great difficulty in making ends meet. The drought of 1859 brought still greater hardships. The river stood in stagnant holes; her cattle had to walk two miles to water; the crops and the grass withered and died. One morning she stood in her doorway and counted fifteen head of her cattle that had died of starvation and thirst during the night.

Neighbors, in those days, really practiced neighborliness. One day a neighbor by the name of Ike Meyers was helping Ellender's oldest son, William, split some rails to patch the fence around her corn patch. The ax came down



on Meyers' foot, leaving a four-inch wound. In the absence of a doctor Ellender brought the man into the house, poured turpentine mixed with sugar into the gaping wound and took six stitches in it. She cared for him until his foot was well.

Stout-hearted Ellender was the mother of Eliza Garrison, whose first husband was Wesley Ferguson. Eliza and her second husband, Joseph Lapsley Wallace, had six children born to them in the log house on their farm on Little River. The first was a son born in 1871, and named Warner, for his grandfather. The next one, in 1873, took his name from the illustrious Sir William Wallace, keeping alive the tradition of every generation's having a "William."

The third child, a girl, was born June 13, 1875; she was named Miriam Amanda for her grandmother Miriam Lapsley and her great-aunt Amanda Lapsley. The fourth child, born in 1877, was Susan Priscilla, also named for a great-aunt, Priscilla Lapsley. Maggie Lee, the fifth child, was born in 1879 and died in 1882. The sixth and last child was Joseph Lee, born in 1882. From the list of names of the children born to Eliza Garrison Wallace, it would appear that Grandmother Wallace had much to say about naming new babies; with the exception of Maggie Lee, they were all named for the Wallace relatives.

Although Miriam Amanda Wallace, eldest daughter of Joseph and Eliza Wallace, was named for her Wallace relatives, she most resembled her grandmother, Ellender Garrison.

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## CHAPTER V

### Miriam's Childhood

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PAT, a big, black shepherd dog with a white ruff around his neck, was Miriam Wallace's constant companion as a child. Once, when she was only four years old, she strayed away from home. Pat was frantic. Back and forth, from Miriam to the house, he raced in a vain attempt to attract attention. Miriam's mother was busy; she had not missed the child, so she only wondered what had got into Pat.

Almost an hour elapsed before she missed Miriam and realized what Pat had been trying to tell her. In great trepidation she searched and called about the house, to no avail. She then rang the great iron bell used to call the hands from the field to dinner.

For more than an hour everybody looked and called, with no response. Some had gone through the orchard, reporting: "She wasn't there, ma'am." Another systematic search — and off in a corner, under the low-sagging branches of a peach tree, they found Miriam, sound asleep, and Pat with her. Slowly rousing himself, the dog looked his disgust, as though to say: "Next time maybe you'll believe me."

One morning as Miriam played in the garden with her brother, she sat down on an exposed root of a big oak tree and with an old knife dug at the rotten base of the tree just because it seemed a good idea at the time. Digging below the dirt line was easier, so she continued to deepen the hole.

"What's this?" she asked her brother Will. "Look, I found a penny!"

The children ran to show their father the penny. It was too heavy to be a copper. He scratched it with his knife.

"A penny, child! Why, you've found a five-dollar gold piece!"

The story that Miriam had struck pay dirt spread.



People from all around came, asking to be allowed to dig for buried treasure. One man dug the rotten tree completely out of the ground, following each root to its extremity; he was sure he'd find Confederate gold, buried during the war, or, perhaps a chest of coins; but he had to give it up. Miriam was quite important, a nine-days' wonder.

Each year Joseph Wallace cleared a little more land, and each year a few more acres of Little River's virgin soil went under the plow. Tall, native pecan trees along the stream bore all the nuts the family and their neighbors could eat. Eliza Wallace planted an orchard from peach and plum seed sent to her from East Texas, and the mast from the large post oaks was valuable feed for the hogs. There was little the family had to buy. The farm produced nearly everything they needed. Cotton was the main cash crop; cattle supplied both food and money.

The home in which Miriam grew up was a sturdy, well-built house of logs, warm in winter, and cool in summer. Facing east on Little River, the front unit of the house consisted of five large rooms, with a gallery, or porch, on the east side overlooking the river. The interior was ceiled, while the outside was, at first, hewn logs. Later, when the Wallaces prospered, these logs were covered with neat weatherboarding and painted.

Texas' prevailing breeze in the summertime is from the south. The master bedroom was usually on that side of the house. Here, Joseph Wallace and his wife, Eliza, gained rest from the busy lives they led.

The furnishings in Eliza Wallace's bedroom were in keeping with the times. The rosewood bureau was heavily carved, and its marble top was always set with cologne bottle, hand mirror, comb and brush. In the center, her beaded pincushion held her pins when they were not in use.

The marble-topped washstand matched the bureau and held a pink china bowl and pitcher, and the soap dish. Hand-embroidered towels hung from the rack that rose at the back of the washstand. A screen in the corner obstructed the view of that other necessary comfort of every bedroom.

Under the four-poster bed was a trundle bed, which was

pulled out at night and used by Miriam and her sister, Susan Priscilla, nicknamed "John." A comfortable rosewood rocker, with its grape and flower carvings, sat in front of the window near Eliza Wallace's sewing table.

No cooking or eating was done in this part of the domestic habitat, for Southern people, at that time, thought it slovenly to cook or eat in the house where one slept and lived.

Some forty or fifty feet west of the sleeping and living quarters were the kitchen and dining rooms, connected to the dwelling unit by a covered gallery. Back of the kitchen, to the west, was the smokehouse, where meat was cured; north of that was the entrance to the storm cellar, where the family took refuge in windstorms. Central Texas had cyclones. During the summer eggs, milk and other perishable foods were kept in this cool, underground room.

Joseph Wallace built a storeroom adjoining the kitchen, in which he kept an abundant supply of staples: flour, sugar and apples by the barrel, ten-pound cans of coffee, and kits or kegs of Scotch mackerel.

South of the dwelling lay the orchard and the vegetable garden. Some distance back of the house, to the west, were the servants' quarters. Old-fashioned flowers were bedded around all the buildings and lined the walk that led to the gate.

Around this plantation colony was an open, running-board fence, with just enough room between boards for the children to squeeze through when they played they were Indians attacking the place.

The Wallace home, with its cluster of odd rooms, stood until a fire destroyed it in 1926. Square nails picked up after the fire, and the large iron bell used to call the hands from the fields were the only souvenirs left from what was once a busy plantation.

Joe Wallace was a conservative; he was careful, but he was not parsimonious. Upon his family he showered every comfort and protection the times afforded.

There was great need in the country for a doctor. Joe Wallace heard of a young Doctor Lynch who was looking for a place to settle. He offered to build Dr. Lynch an office and



a bedroom in the front yard, and to give him meals, in order to have a physician near. Dr. Lynch accepted the offer, and two more rooms were added to the colony of houses. For a decade or more Dr. Lynch made his home there.

On Dr. Lynch's office door there hung a large slate. When a man came on horseback to get the doctor to go to minister to some member of his family, he would find that Dr. Lynch had written on the slate where he had gone. If another came for the doctor before he returned, the second man would scratch out the name of the first who had come and would write his own name. Dr. Lynch often made a complete swing around the county before returning to the Wallace farm. Although he might be away for days, the Wallaces knew where he could be found.

The desire for education is like a golden warp in the tapestry of Texas. It was almost an obsession, if a benign one, in those early days. A highly intelligent, well-educated man himself, Joseph Wallace desired for his children the best education obtainable. His two sons had, for several years, attended a school known as "Sunshine," near the family plantation. He was not entirely pleased with this arrangement. Miriam was almost old enough to go to school, and, in another two years, Susan Priscilla\* would be old enough. The children were too young to be sent away to school. A tutor in the house would be a solution for the girls, but the boys, he thought, should have association with other boys. There was a good school at Center Lake, six or seven miles northwest of the farm, but roads were bad.

One day a neighbor happened by and told Joe Wallace about a beautiful tract of land near the Center Lake school that could be bought reasonably from a man named Armstrong. Wallace and his two sons saddled their horses and rode over to see it. The farm was on a high, rolling prairie, and was not nearly so heavily timbered as their river plantation.

"The prairie, too," thought Joe Wallace, "will be a healthier place to live than the low, river country."

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\* Susan Priscilla was never known by any other name than "John." She was given this nickname because, as a very small child, she loved to sit on the floor and wear her Uncle John Wallace's hat when he came visiting the family.

He had money to buy the land, and his children needed the advantages of the nearby school. He bought it. "What better investment can I make for them than in education and black land," he said.

The Wallaces dug a well, built a house, and moved to the prairie. The new frame house was quite different from the log house. The social order had changed vastly since that old home was built, before the war. People were now coming to the new idea of connecting kitchen and dining room onto the house. No longer was there an abundance of house slaves to run back and forth between the kitchen and the big house with hot water, and with cool drinking water in summer. Folks were even coming to the Yankee idea of building china closets and clothes cupboards in their homes, a practice once thought "dirty" by Southerners.

The new Wallace home, where Miriam Ferguson spent her girlhood, was built in an L-shape. It faced east. The front, three-room part was two stories, while the back three rooms trailed off to the west in single file, and were only one story high. The gallery was built two stories on the front. Around the south side, and out the long ell the gallery was only one story high. Although the kitchen was connected to the house, it was placed at the extreme end on the west. The storeroom, where several months' supply of groceries was kept, was connected to the kitchen.

The gravel walk that led from the front gallery to the gate was shaded by cedars, and on the south side of the house there grew an enormous cottonwood tree. At night the wind in its leaves, masquerading as raindrops, was a sure cure for insomnia. A white picket fence enclosed this scene called "Home" by the Wallace family. Southey says: "There is a magic in that little word; it is a mystic circle that surrounds comforts and virtues never known beyond its hallowed limits."

Joseph Wallace was one of the first men in Bell County, Texas, to fence his land. Free range was considered everybody's privilege. What right had he to fence his land, even though he did pay taxes on his acres? So thought many of his neighbors.

Feeling against him because he fenced his land grew so



tense that, for a time, Joe Wallace deemed it best to go armed. On one occasion, as he posted along on his way to Belton on business, he met some newcomers to the country. Seeing his guns, they asked him if he was the sheriff.

"No," he replied, "but a fellow has just got to protect himself in this country."

Land fencing was not the only innovation in which Joe Wallace was ahead of his time. Ticks were a great menace to the life and weight of his cattle. This was long before the day of the dipping vat in Texas, and his neighbors accepted the tick as one of the inevitable pests of nature. But not Joe Wallace. He resolved to do something about it. He knew the tick didn't like creosote. "And if I put a little arsenic with the creosote, I've got him!" Joe reasoned.

Applying the mixture was another problem. First, he tried roping the animal in order to swab it: that was not only a slow process, but the chasing also further reduced its weight. Here, the fence came in again, for he knew he must pen his cattle in order to be able to handle them. Driving them first into small pens, he then put them through an open, board-fence chute. As they passed through the chute in single file, the animals were daubed through the boards of the fence with swabs tied onto sticks. The cattle were then turned into fenced pastures where the dead ticks dropped off; the beasts began to eat and put on weight. Not all the ticks were killed by this method, but they were reduced to a minimum.

Miriam sat on top of the fence, well out of danger, while she watched the swabbing of the cattle. After the swabbing, if feed was plentiful, Joe Wallace would often supplement the range grass with extra feeding in order to make an early market with fat cattle. However, that was not the common practice of stockmen in Texas at that time.

Joe, Miriam's youngest brother, was fast becoming a beautiful child. His fair skin, blue eyes, and brown hair gave him an ethereal appearance. His mental faculties far surpassed his years. He was deeply religious. For hours at a time he would have some member of the family read the Bible to him while he made queer-looking marks on his blackboard. At intervals he would command his reader to

stop; then, from his blackboard, he would read exactly what they had read to him. He would then erase his hieroglyphics and demand that more be read to him. This uncanny procedure went on for hours at a time.

It had always been the custom in the Wallace family to have family prayer each evening. As soon as little Joe could talk, he took charge of these family services. His mentality and unusual beauty seemed almost in tune with the Infinite. All the other Wallace children were normally stupid; this child prodigy alarmed the parents. Had the Heavenly Grace blessed them with a John Wesley? Was it a reward or a warning? Where would it all end! Such beauty, such goodness, and such intelligence, they felt, is never allowed to remain long in this wicked world. In July 1891, little Joe became ill with a severe pain in his stomach. The family doctor called it cramp colic. Dr. Barton, who lived in Salado, was sent for; he examined the child and told the family that this was a new disease called appendicitis. Surgeons in the East were removing the appendix, but, as yet, he did not know how to perform the operation. On July 27, little Joe died. The following year Dr. Barton went East to learn how to do an appendectomy.

The Wallaces were of steady, God-fearing pioneer stock; the type that is the backbone of any nation. Joseph Wallace's life was full of activity, though his biography would not thrill a reader. He was too conservative to be interesting. His family and his fast-growing fortune were his chief interests in life. "A man with property must of necessity be cautious; he cannot afford to take the chances that a man can take who has nothing." So reasoned Joe Wallace. Because of this caution, Wallace lacked the splash of color and adventure that characterized his neighbor, Old Parson Ferguson, an exponent of rugged individualism.

Not even the Center Lake school measured up to the standard now set by Joseph Wallace for the education of his children. After two years he employed a tutor in the home. Miss Viola Bradshaw remained in the family for more than two years, a most amiable person and a good teacher.

Lessons over, Miriam and her sister John adored to dress



up in their mother's clothes and play "lady." Miriam was "Mrs. Rambees," and John was "Mrs. Maldaldy." Miriam was now almost thirteen. Her education to date had been spotted, lacking in balance and well-rounded development.

"Where can I educate my children that is not too far from home?" Joe Wallace pondered the question. Salado was considered one of the educational centers of Texas; Miriam and her two older brothers should go there to school.

"They can live with my sister Betty, in Salado," Joe Wallace decided. "With Betty they will be well chaperoned and cared for."

Aunt Betty Smith was a stern disciplinarian and frugal. She thought Joe far too lenient with his family. Joe indulged his children in every luxury and advantage the day afforded: a noble trait in a father, but most disastrous to his sons, argued Betty.

Betty demanded of Joe's children that they "toe the mark." One night at dinner Miriam helped herself too generously to syrup and hot biscuits.

"Finish your syrup, Miriam," her aunt admonished her.

"But I'm full, I just can't!" the child replied.

"Very well," Aunt Betty said, as she nodded to the cook to come and take Miriam's plate. "Take this syrup and put it up for Miriam's breakfast," she commanded. "I just can't understand Joe's allowing his children to be so extravagant!"

Sunday afternoon was the allotted time for studying of the next week's Sunday School lesson. Miriam and her cousin, Maggie Wallace, were sitting on the side gallery studying and wishing they could get away from Aunt Betty to play with their friends next door when they discovered that their good aunt had fallen asleep in her chair. It was too good to be true! Down the steps and around the house they stole and sped to join their friends. They found the neighbor girls in the orchard, perched in trees eating peaches. To make a bad matter worse, some of their companions were boys!

When Aunt Betty awoke, missed the girls and found them roosting in a tree on Sunday, with boys, the disgrace was more than she could bear! Pulling a long switch from

a peach tree, she lashed the big, thirteen-year-old Miriam and her cousin, Maggie, all the way home. As further punishment for desecrating the Sabbath day they were sent to bed supperless.

Miriam and her two brothers progressed rapidly at Salado College; Miriam was particularly happy in Mrs. Orgain's art class. Things seemed to be going well and Joe Wallace thought he had at last found the right school for his children. But at the end of two years, either Aunt Betty had had all she could stand of Joe's "spoiled children," or they had had all they could bear of Aunt Betty's discipline, for Miriam moved to Baylor Female College in Belton, Texas, where she was to remain until 1898.

Baylor, in those days, consisted of only the main building, which later became known as "Luther Hall." To the rear were scattered the Ely-Pepper cottages which housed the girls who were working their way through school. A stone fence three feet high surrounded the campus; ten feet inside this wall was the invisible deadline. No girl was allowed beyond that point without special permission.



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## CHAPTER VI

### Jim and Miriam

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THE Wallace girls were both pretty and attractive. A wealth of brown, curly hair blessed each of them. Miriam looked more like her grandmother, Ellender Garrison, while her sister John resembled the Wallaces. Their always indulgent father gratified their every whim; he was thoughtful of little things that mean so much to girls. To augment and amplify the boarding school fare, always monotonous even when it is good, Joe Wallace left an order at a grocery in Belton to send candy and fruit each week to his daughters. Whenever he went to Belton on business, which was at least once each week, he carried the girls cake and other goodies from their own family kitchen.

People ate in the nineties. Women wanted to be plump and possess curves. Dieting and calory phobias did not curse the country. John was plump, and, according to the standards of the day, much more of a beauty than her sister. Miriam, with her flat bust and slender hips, was born about forty years too soon to be considered a beauty. However, with a few ruffles in the front, and a little padding in the rear, she overcame, to a great extent, her inadequate rotundity,

To church, and when off the campus, the Baylor girls wore a blue-gray uniform made coat-suit style, with the conventional square mortarboard cap. This was known as the "Convict Uniform."

Ready-made clothes had not come into vogue in the

nineties; everything had to be made, either at home or by a dressmaker. Summer vacation was no time of rest for Eliza Wallace, for the girls' clothes had to be made for winter. Much of this sewing she did herself. It was a busy season; a sewing woman was employed in the home, and the girls helped sew, too. Each girl had a summer and a winter wardrobe which had to be abundantly replenished.

On holidays, and frequently on Saturdays, Miriam's father or one of her brothers would drive to Belton in the family surrey to take the girls home for a week end.

Miriam's half-sister, Annie Ferguson, had married Tom Dollarhide, and they were living on the farm left Annie by her father, Wesley Ferguson, who, it will be remembered, was Jim Ferguson's uncle and the first husband of Miriam Wallace's mother. On one of these week ends there happened to be a party at the Dollarhide home. The Wallace girls were looking prettier than usual, and it so happened that Annie had invited her cousin, Jim Ferguson, to the party. Jim had great tales of his travels in the West, and delighted in embroidering his adventures to entertain Annie's guests. He was the life of the party.

Miriam's dress for the Dollarhide party was some kind of white material, made with a full skirt trimmed in lace. Draped around her shoulders was a sort of shawl bertha also edged in lace, into which pink ribbon was inserted. Her brown curls formed a halo about her head.

For Jim Ferguson, it was "love at first sight" of the little curly-headed girl four years his junior; yet, he felt keenly the difference in their financial status. Born "with a silver spoon in her mouth," she was the petted, pampered, sheltered daughter of one of Bell County's landed gentry. Jim Ferguson had knocked from pillar to post. Here was a challenge — something to work for! His prospects of winning her seemed meager, and it was several years before he got up the courage to call on her.

After his admission to the bar he was a constant visitor in the Wallace home. His excuse for many of his visits was to discuss land problems with Miriam's father and seek advice of an older and wiser head. The Wallace home was about halfway between Belton and Holland, where Jim



went frequently to try cases. The home was famous for its hospitality and good food, to say nothing of its pretty daughters. Jim Ferguson was not the only one who made it convenient to drop in regularly.

Miriam's father, despite his conservative ideas, admired the young Ferguson tremendously. Joe Wallace liked the aggressive way Jim tackled any task that he undertook. After one of Jim's visits Miriam's father said to her mother:

"Eliza, there is a young man who is going far."

The winter of 1897-98 had been cruelly severe. Miriam's father had quite a large number of cattle on hand. In spite of the cold, the winter grass and extra feed that had been put into them had finished off the cattle, and they were ready for an early market. Late in January of 1898, Joe Wallace decided that his cattle had reached about their maximum weight, and the price of fat cattle was at its peak. Better prices were being paid in Kansas City; Miriam's father made preparations to ship his cattle to that market. His wife begged him not to go on the train with the herd.

"You are just too old to withstand the exposure," she argued.

His reply was: "The weather is bad, and the cattle must be kept on their feet. Besides, it is too big a trainload to trust to any hands. There are some things that one can't pay to have done. The owner is the only person in the world who'll brave the cold and look after the cattle continuously. You must not worry about me, Eliza; I've been riding cattle trains ever since I've been grown, and I'll be quite comfortable in the warm caboose."

The two Wallace boys went to Belton and brought Miriam and John home for the week end before their father's departure for Kansas City. It was a gay and busy three days in the family home. All hands turned out to help prepare for the long, tedious haul. Extra blankets were put in Joe Wallace's bed roll to keep him warm at night; heavy gloves and an extra overcoat were provided. Miriam and her mother and sister spent the day cooking and baking the things he liked to eat to put into his provision basket. A suitcase was packed with his best clothes. The long trek over and the cattle sold, he would again become a gentleman:

he would go to a hotel, have a bath, rest up a little while, and then do some shopping for the family before starting home by passenger train.

The cattle brought a good price. Joe Wallace returned with a fat check, a pocketful of money and presents for each and all. He was more than happy to be at home again, for he had contracted a cold — a very bad cold.

Those lines of Byron that he loved to quote came to him as he approached his family hearth:

'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest  
bark  
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near  
home;  
'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will  
mark  
Our coming, and look brighter when we  
come.

Eliza Wallace put her husband to bed with a mustard plaster on his chest, and used all the simple home remedies. By nine o'clock the next morning his head had drawn back against his shoulders. The doctor pronounced it meningitis. Within twenty-four hours "God's finger touched him, and he slept."

Miriam's mother turned away from her husband's grave to find that he had left her with \$50,000 in cash, a sizable fortune for that day, several thousand acres of rich farm land, a couple of cotton gins, and a good block of stock in a Belton bank. It was to her husband's nephew, Jim Ferguson, that Eliza Wallace turned for legal advice.

Eliza wondered why her husband, who had possessed such rare business ability, would have so much idle cash on hand. About half of this money had been realized from the recent sale of the cattle, but the other half was as dead-wood, and not earning a penny. She thought that perhaps he had had in mind the starting of a new bank somewhere in the country. In that day it was every man's ambition to be a banker; bankers were rendering a real service to the community.



As legal adviser and Miriam's admirer, Jim was now a constant visitor in the Wallace home. He was also a nephew of the widow's first husband, though no blood relation to Miriam.

One June day, as Jim came out of the courthouse in Belton, he saw Miriam's mother go into a jewelry store across the street. He followed her to "pass the time of day" with her and inquire after the health of the family. She was looking at diamond rings that she had ordered on approval for Miriam's approaching birthday. Jim remarked:

"A diamond ring is something I have never owned and never expect to be able to afford."

"Well," replied Miriam's mother, "then I'll just buy you one." Moreover, she invited him to come out and call whenever he could. Jim needed no urging; his visits had been spaced increasingly closer for the past two years.

Almost every Sunday he would dress in his best clothes, put on his diamond ring, hire the highest-stepping horse at the livery stable, and go out to call on Miss Miriam Wallace. Miriam had other suitors. When Jim "popped the question," after a careful leading up to it, she said, in a word, "No!"

Next day he borrowed a horse and buggy from a friend and drove out to look over the old Ferguson farm, as a melancholy gesture to the happy days now gone, alas, forever! It was "First Monday" in Belton, and, although "First Mondays" always brought new business to the young attorney, his heart was not in his work.

"Aunt Laura" Johnson was alone in the middle of the field, picking cotton. He started toward her to ask where Vince, her husband, was. He drove right down the cotton rows, with no thought of the damage he was doing. Aunt Laura called out:

"Oh Mista Jim! Please doan knock my cotton out like dat!"

With a bewildered, haunted look he retorted:

"To hell with the damn cotton! That Wallace girl won't have me!"

Jim did not give up hope. Every Sunday he called on the girl. Once, he seemed to be making fair headway, and

Miriam was "falling" for his sweet talk. He slyly put his arm around her as they sat alone in the parlor; his progress was rudely interrupted by a loud shriek from Miriam. A large wasp had chosen Miriam's shoulder as a good place to take a bite.

Always the showman, Jim resorted to stratagem and plots to excite Miriam's interest. He conceived the idea of running for city attorney of Belton; this pleased her so much that she consented to marry him. During the latter days of the campaign he used it as an excuse for moving up the date of the wedding. Their first plan had been to be married after he was elected. On a certain Tuesday, following one of his Sunday visits, he wrote to Miriam, stating that his election was assured, that a city attorney needed a wife to add dignity to the position -- and what was the use of waiting any longer!

The next Sunday he called, as usual. "You are rushing me," Miriam objected; "and besides, you have never asked my mother's consent."

Jim went right after his Aunt Eliza, and his plea was eloquent:

"Aunt Eliza, when you gave me this beautiful diamond ring, I thought that it was all in the world you had that I wanted. But in recent months, I find that you have something that I want much more than the diamond ring. Aunt Eliza, I want to marry your daughter, Miriam."

Miriam's mother rose to the occasion and replied:

"Jim, you're a fine young man. As my first husband's nephew, I've known you since you were a child. Miriam's father always admired you tremendously, and I know that he would be pleased with this. Consequently, I'm happy to give my consent. But have you discussed your plans with your mother? Fanny Ferguson is an intelligent woman, and I should like to know what she thinks of the match."

"My mother," Jim said, "will be happy and honored, I am very sure, to have Miriam for a daughter-in-law. Ever since I left the farm and moved to Belton to practice law, she has worried about me not having a home."

At two o'clock in the afternoon on New Year's Eve, the last day of 1899, Miriam Amanda Wallace became the bride



of James Edward Ferguson in the parlor of the Wallace home. He was twenty-eight, and she was twenty-four years old.

Jim bought a lot on Penelope Street in Belton, Texas, where he planned to build their first home. Meantime, they boarded with a Mrs. Nelson.

Strange happenings occurred in Belton in those early days. One day a stranger came to town. He walked up to a saloon bar and threw down a gold watch; he said he wanted to bet the watch against twenty dollars that he could outjump any damn man in Belton by two feet. He seemed to be drunk. A Dr. Hawkins was considered to be quite a jumper by the local talent; a hurry call went out for him.

The stranger said Dr. Hawkins would have to jump first. Hawkins stood on the edge of the sidewalk and jumped a good, long way into the street. The stranger then stood in Hawkins' tracks and, with an odd, low squat, outjumped him by over two feet.

The stranger then invited the crowd in to have a drink. He put the watch and the twenty dollars on the bar and spoke to Bud Methvin, the leading Hawkins supporter:

"What'd ya say if I said I bet this watch and money against forty dollars that I can outjump your man by three feet?"

The stranger seemed to be definitely drunker now. Methvin put up the money. Again the challenger called on Dr. Hawkins to jump first, and for the second time he outjumped the doctor, this time by three feet. The crowd cheered.

The stranger said, "Let's have another drink, boys," and staggered back into the bar. As the crowd was drinking his health, he said to Bud Methvin: "I'll bet this watch and all this money against sixty dollars that I can stand flat-footed and jump on top of this bar."

Surely, the fool was drunk now! Methvin called the bet. With the greatest of ease the stranger stood flat-footed and sprang to the top of the bar.

"Boys," he said, "let's have another drink." Again they drank his health at Methvin's expense. Once more the

stranger staggered to the sidewalk and the crowd followed him. He turned to Methvin:

"What would you say if I said that I would bet this watch and all this money that I could stand flat-footed and jump up on top of this store awning?"

Methvin replied, "I'd bet, by G — d, you could do it!"

The middle and late spring brought many changes in Jim's new family and business affairs. His election as city attorney added to his professional duties. The death of Vince Johnson, who, with "Aunt Laura" and their son Bud, had lived on the Ferguson farm since Jim was about sixteen, presented another difficulty. Laura and her son could not work the farm by themselves. Jim decided to bring them to Belton and use them as cook and yard boy as soon as the new house was ready.

In April Miriam told her friend, Mrs. Arthur Potts, that she was expecting a baby in the latter part of November. Mrs. Potts very kindly offered to let the Fergusons board with her until their own home was finished. They lived with Mr. and Mrs. Potts until the end of the summer, when they moved into the new five-room red-and-white frame bungalow, which was a gift from Miriam's mother.

Laura Johnson washed the first dishes in the new home, and served the Fergusons from 1900 until June 1938, when she retired on her savings, aged about eighty years. A rare character, born two or three years before the Civil War, Laura ruled the Ferguson household with a "rod of iron."

In the early morning hours of November 22, 1900, in the house on Penelope Street, Miriam Ferguson was delivered of a 3½-pound baby girl. Dr. Law, assisted by Mamma Jane, the town's colored maternity nurse, brought the baby into the world. That child was I. Doctor Law asked to be allowed to name me. My parents agreed, with one proviso: that my middle name be Wallace, which was Mamma's maiden name. "Fine," said Dr. Law. "We will call her Ouida Wallace." So, along with all the colored and white babies he had ushered into the world, I was added to his list of Ouidas. Dr. Law was such an ardent fan of the writer Ouida that he even called the mare he drove Ouida. I have



always hated my name and wished that I could have been given my mother's full name, Miriam Wallace. The screaming brat was first handed to Laura Johnson.

One of the wonders of the world to me is that a first child ever survives its untrained parents. Babies must be, after all, pretty tough little articles. For nine months I had colic. Laura, Daddy, Mamma, and even Bud, Laura's son, took turns walking me, but nothing was ever done to get at the cause of the colic.

Laura would say: "Her stomach hurts her 'cause she's harngr." But Mamma was afraid food would kill me, so the march went on. Daddy would walk me by the hour, singing some railroad ditty.

Laura told me many times: "Your mammy an' your daddy wuz so scared they kills you that they just give you a little lime water an' mighty nigh starve you to death."

For about two years prior to my birth my father's mother, Granny Ferguson, had lived with her son Joe Lee and his family in West Texas. When I was born, Daddy wrote to his mother and asked her to come and see the one and only baby in the world. Granny Ferguson came, and stayed the rest of her life, except for short visits to her other children.

In a letter to her daughter Kate, Granny wrote:

Little Ouida is fast becoming a very pretty child. Jim and Miriam simply worship her. . . . Miriam paid nine dollars for a clock. . . .

Two years and nine months after I was born, my nose was completely disjointed by the arrival of a sister. Daddy named her "Ruby Dorrace" for two of his cousins.

My father often quoted these lines to my mother, just to tease her: "When a mother beholds her first baby's face, her husband takes the second place." This was doubly true when the second child arrived, for Daddy and I were both pushed out. We always remained out in any matter where Dorrace was concerned. The result was that, perforce, Daddy and I grew to be more understanding friends through the years.

I soon learned that two could play at the game of par-

tiality, and began showering my affection on the one who took my side of things. However, I do not blame or resent my mother's loving Dorrace more than she loved me, because Dorrace was the baby and closer to her.

Dorrace was always a comfort to Mamma. To start with, she was born plump and healthy, while I was a delicate young child. From the day she was born and on through the years, most of the time she lived in the house with Mamma; consequently, Mamma knew where she was every minute, and knew exactly what she was doing. Little sister never caused her a moment of anxiety. Contrast this with the cases of her other daughter, Ouida, and Ouida's father, Jim! Mamma never knew where we were, what we were doing, or what we were going to say or do next!

Mamma often said: "Jim's great love for Ouida is not so much love as it is sympathy, for he realizes that she is so much like him that she must be always into something."

After Dorrace was born, I fell almost entirely to Daddy's care when he was at home. He was patience personified. He could tell the most wonderful stories and could make a game of all the unpleasant chores of daily living. When I had to give my bed to the newcomer, I was first put in a big bed by myself. After I had fallen out of the bed several times, Daddy put the bed against the wall and slept with me.

In the mornings, while Mamma attended to the new baby, Daddy dressed me. I wore a belt, with straps over my shoulders, to which my panties and stockings were fastened. Dressing was the biggest game of all, for Daddy called these straps I wore his little mule's harness. As he straightened out my harness, he would tell me how, when he was in the West, he would rise at four in the morning and harness the mules in the lumber camp.

I never tired of the story, and made him go over the same tale every morning. I knew all his yarns word by word, and when, to tease me, he would change the story a bit, it pleased him tremendously when I would correct him. He would tell me he was going to put the bridle around his little mule's belly, and I would protest loudly that the bridle went on the mule's head. This, he thought, showed signs of intelligence! Our pillow fights would go on until we drew a



sharp command from Mamma to stop. Daddy never attempted to comb my curls. That unpleasant job always fell to Mamma's lot.

We adored to play with Granny Ferguson. Every time she went for a visit to her other children she would bring us real moccasins made by the Indians of West Texas. She would play Indian with us, and we thought it was absolutely necessary to have moccasins to run an Indian race. She would put on her moccasins and we would race through the house until poor Mamma would be almost crazy.

Granny delighted in entertaining us with our father's childhood pranks. She kept a very large trunk in her room filled with her keepsakes and her treasures. On rainy days she amused us by letting us prow through it. We knew the history of everything in the trunk, but it was always fun to look again.

Granny had two possessions stored there that she seemed to treasure above everything else. One was a little blue checkered apron that our father had worn when he was about two years old; the other was some silver spoons. Time and again she told us the story of the apron and the spoons. Whenever she missed little Jim she would first look in the sideboard drawer. If the spoons were gone, she knew that he was on his way to the mill, some three or four hundred yards from the house. He always took the spoons with him in the skirt of his little apron, and, as he toddled along, he would drop them, one by one.

Jim was the "apple of her eye." At least, she made his children believe that he was her favorite. She was a clever woman and a devoted mother; perhaps, when she was in Joe's home and in Alvah's home she tickled the vanity of their children by playing up their father's childhood pranks. However, the fact that she spent most of her time with us, with only occasional visits to the others, is proof sufficient that our father was her pet.

From the time I could talk Daddy and Granny taught me to recite small pieces. I took elocution from Miss Mary Hudson, and Daddy hoped that, since I had disappointed him in not being a boy, I would at least learn to speak in public.

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## CHAPTER VII

# Their Early Married Life

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THEIR first calamity struck the prospering Fergusons in the winter of 1904.

Dorrace and I were growing into husky youngsters. Daddy's law practice was increasing, and his loan and trust business was doing well.

In the wee hours of a winter morning the telephone awoke Daddy. His office building was on fire! He ran, pulling on his clothes as he went to the scene of the fire. Mamma, Granny Ferguson, Laura, Bud, and the two of us girls followed.

Daddy lost his entire law library, worth \$6,000, his loan and trust office, housed next door, and his opera house, which was gutted. The outside walls of solid stone still stood. Because of the prohibitive rate on a theater there was but \$2,000 insurance on the whole property. The library that had taken years to collect had to be started all over again.

With the \$2,000 insurance money Daddy started to rebuild an office for the Belton Loan and Trust Company on the corner where the opera house had been. Nalle & Company of Austin, Texas, was given the contract to build the fixtures.

While the fixtures were being installed, Columbus Jackson strolled into the new loan and trust office and said:

"Jim, with all these fancy fixtures you're putting in, looks like you're going to open a bank."



"I haven't the money to start a bank, Mr. Jackson; I'm just building a railing to keep the grass widows from bothering Oscar Lyles."

"Well," Lum said, "if you want to start a bank, Jim, I'll put up \$10,000, provided you'll agree to run it."

To Jim Ferguson, there was magic in his words! "To be a banker!" he mused. It really couldn't be true that Lum Jackson meant business! Daddy admitted later he slept very little that night, and he arose next morning resolved to find out if Mr. Jackson was in earnest about starting a bank.

"No, I wasn't joking; I meant it," Jackson said. "I'm ready to put my money on the barrel head. But we'll have to get others to go in with us and start with \$25,000 capital."

Jim managed to scrape together \$5,000. Before noon that day Ferguson and Jackson had found enough people in Belton who were willing to put their money in the new bank to make another \$10,000. Afternoon found Jim on the train, bound for Austin to get a charter. This was the twenty-fifth charter granted for a state bank in Texas.

The Farmer's State Bank of Belton! James Edward Ferguson, president; Columbus Jackson, vice president.

Jim Ferguson — farm boy, bellhop, miner, vineyard worker, barbed wire roustabout, teamster, mule harnesser and lumberjack, bridge builder, railroad man, lawyer, city attorney, and now — a bank president at thirty-three!

About this time James Bryce Ferguson, the son of Daddy's oldest brother, Alvah, came to live with us and go to school in Belton. Bryce was a brilliant student and read constantly. When he was graduated, later in his life, from the University of Texas the words, "Ferg made Phi Beta Kappa in a walk," appeared under his picture in the school's annual, the *Cactus*.

Bryce was serious, and possessed of great dignity, even as a boy, and I am sure that his cousin Ouida, eight years his junior, made his life miserable most of the time. I adored him.

Bryce's one recreation was to make and fly kites: small kites, large ones and fantastic creations. I plagued him constantly to let me hold the string. He would warn me: "This one pulls too hard; it will sweep you off your feet and pull

you up to Heaven!" That didn't discourage Ouida. What, at five years old, could be nicer than being swept up to Heaven on the wings of a kite!

Bryce got even with me for all my pestering him. He gave me the measles. Mamma put him in quarantine and forbade our entering his room. Dorrace, of course, obeyed, but the next thing Mamma knew, I was not only in the room but was also on the bed with Bryce. I had a severe attack, but at least this was one disease I hadn't introduced into the household.

In every family, I suppose, there is some jealousy and backbiting about the "in-laws." Mamma was considered extravagant; this was always deplored by Daddy's side of the house. The smallest detail of her spending went the round of the Fergusons, with no discount for the fact that it was her own money she was spending, and not Jim's. Mamma housed, nursed, and spent much money on Daddy's family with no thanks asked or received. Bryce is the one exception. Dorrace and I look on Bryce as on an only brother. His climb to fame in the legal profession despite a body weakened by long illness resulting from his service in the first World War, was a great joy and satisfaction to us.

Daddy was not a frugal Ferguson; he was always buying something and bringing it home. One day he brought home a horse, a beautiful, high-stepping bay. He named him "Old Kicker." The horse was continually running away. Daddy was crazy about him, but Mamma was deathly afraid of "that beast," and refused to ride behind him. Kicker broke several buggy shafts in dashes for freedom, but Daddy was still confident he would find ways to gentle the horse. After exhausting all accepted methods he conceived the idea of bringing the "problem child" into the front yard and tying him to a gallery post near where the family sat. "Once he gets used to us," Daddy argued, "he'll calm down."

The horse's trembling ceased. Things went well until a door slammed inside the house. Old Kicker took the gallery post with him over the front fence! When next First Monday rolled around, he was sold for a song, conduct not guaranteed.

The new bank was enjoying a good business when, one



day in 1906, Jozack Miller, president of the Belton National Bank, called on Daddy in the Farmer's State Bank. He opened the conversation with:

"Jim, I've come to buy your bank. Belton is too small for both of us. You are young and aggressive, and with the recent bank failure in Temple, there is an opening for another bank. You can go there and make a small fortune. I'll give you \$1.25 a share for your stock, which is a twenty-five per cent profit for a little over a year's operation."

"I'll have to talk to my Board of Directors about it," Jim replied.

The offer was accepted. Jim guaranteed the \$90,000 worth of farmers' notes held by the bank. To ask such a guarantee was unheard of, and it was considered folly for young Ferguson to have made it. But Daddy always played long shots. Moreover, he was sure the farmers would pay up unless there was a crop failure.

Street gossip shamed Jozack Miller for "stealing young Ferguson's Bank," but when autumn rolled around and the crops were in, the notes were paid off like clockwork; it was another story then. Daddy dropped in at the bank to ask how collections were coming in. Miller handed him two hundred dollars.

"Jim," he said, shaking hands, "take this as a present in appreciation of your good work as a loan agent. It is the last of the \$90,000 in loans that you guaranteed! All paid up, Jim."

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## CHAPTER VIII

### Family Portrait

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AFTER the sale of the Farmer's State Bank of Belton in 1906, Daddy organized a new bank in Temple, seven miles away, which came to be known as the Temple State Bank. For almost a year the family continued to live in Belton, while Daddy commuted every day by interurban car. It took considerable coaxing on his part to get Mamma to consent to move to Temple. She loved her little home and being near her family in Belton. There was nothing else in the world that her heart desired, but Daddy was full of ambition and plans. To get her interested in moving to Temple, he bought two beautiful lots on North Seventh Street, on which grew a dozen hackberry trees.

The lots failed to interest Mamma. Daddy sold the little red cottage in Belton and moved us into a rent house he owned until he could complete a home in Temple. That convinced Mamma he was determined to move, but that didn't make her like it.

The new house in Temple was a frame, late Victorian in architecture. It had nine rooms, with a two-story gallery on two sides of it. The usual Victorian cupola perched atop the gallery to the southeast. It was a mansion for Temple in those days, but it never, by the wildest stretch of the imagination, could have been called beautiful. It was, however, quite convenient and comfortable. Daddy, the architect, and the contractor had planned and completed it without



much help from Mamma. She would often remind us: "This is your father's house."

After the first year she found that her flowers grew much better in Temple's black, waxy soil than they had in Belton's limestone. Next to Dorrace, Mamma always loved flowers more than anything else. My earliest recollection of Mamma is with asthma and flowers; she always had both. In Temple she discovered that she had found the spot where flowers bloom and die, only to be reincarnated into millions more like them, and she adored the place. She spent in her garden every hour that her delicate health would permit.

Electrical storms frightened Mamma. A friend of one of her brothers had been killed by lightning while riding in a wagon with her brother. Her sister John's baby had narrowly escaped death when a bolt of lightning came down the chimney and set the rug under the cradle on fire. Aunt Laura Johnson, our cook, told with relish of a family she had known who had camped under a tree; lightning struck the tree and it fell on them, killing the entire family. Mamma was extremely nervous every time we had an electrical storm, and there were plenty of them in Central Texas. When storms came at night, she made Dorrace and me get into bed with her and Daddy. Dorrace, being smaller, was put between Daddy and Mamma, while I lay across the foot of their bed. Mamma would say: "If one is killed, we'll all die together." These suicide pacts continued until we were almost grown. Dorrace and I were not afraid of storms, and we despised getting out of bed to appease Mamma. Children can be so perverse!

As children, Dorrace and I were not too congenial. She liked to play with paper dolls. I didn't. She often threatened me: "If you kick over my paper dolls I'll cry, and Mamma will come and punish you." Mamma used everything on me from a hair brush to a peach tree switch. I can testify that anyone who has never been lashed with a watersprout from a peach tree has not truly lived and suffered.

Daddy whipped me only once in my life.

Dorrace was ticklish, and I adored to tickle her in the ribs. We slept together in a room adjoining Mamma and Daddy's room. Every time I touched Dorrace she would

yell for Mamma. One night, Mamma sent Daddy in to do the job of punishing me for tickling my little sister. I remember that he looked like a Ku Kluxer in his long, white night-shirt slit up the sides, with his bare shanks showing above his house slippers. There was fire in his eyes, and in his strong right hand was vengeance!

Seating himself on a chair, and draping a child over each knee, he proceeded to spank first one bottom and then the other with the palm of his hand. It didn't hurt like Mamma's whippings, and he was so funny about it that Dorrace and I giggled ourselves to sleep. Every scolding or punishment I ever received from Daddy came at the instigation of either Mamma or Dorrace — or both. Not that I didn't deserve most of them, but Daddy always overlooked my infraction of rules.

When I was about ten years old I broke my arm playing "pop-the-whip" at school. As soon as Daddy found out that the X-ray picture showed the big bone to be slightly out of line he "hit the ceiling," and demanded that my arm be broken and reset. He said that when I was a young lady I would want to wear short sleeves, and it would be terrible to have a crooked arm.

In the middle of the morning Daddy telephoned to say he was sending Dr. Pollock out to break and reset my arm. Out the back door and down the alley I went as fast as my splinted wing would allow. When the doctor arrived, I could not be found. I stayed at a neighbor's house until all danger was past. The arm is not crooked.

Dorrace and I grew up while it was still thought in the South that all ladies should play either the piano or the violin. The harp had gone out of style with Tara's halls. I was exposed to the piano and Dorrace to the violin; in neither case did the lessons take, and we have both been immune to music ever since. Nature was niggardly in not giving at least one of us Daddy's ear for music. Although he never had a lesson in his life, he could play, after a fashion, any tune he heard on the piano, the fiddle or the harmonica.

Saturday was the red-letter day in the week for me in those days: no school, and Daddy didn't come home to lunch. If I had been good all week, I was allowed to take



his lunch to him. Don't ever think that Mamma didn't hold this plum over me.

Daddy stayed at the bank all day on Saturdays, because the farmers came to town on that day. Mamma usually sent me, and Daddy's lunch, with the colored man in the buggy, but, if I worked it just right, she might let me go on the streetcar, alone, all grown-up and independent! I adored to sit with Daddy while he ate his lunch. I came to know some of the most prominent farmers and stockmen in the country. I enjoyed their discussions of crops, stock, weather and loans. After we had lived several years in Austin, and I was being married, some of those same farmers and stockmen sent me beautiful presents.

I wanted to be a banker, like Daddy; but, of course, a woman couldn't ever be anything so important! My heavens! No! Mamma once said: "I have two daughters: one is a perfect lady, and the other is a sociable dog." The last word might have been worse — I was not the "perfect lady."

On one of those Saturdays I talked a bicycle out of Daddy. On another, I worked him for a white felt hat that Mamma had said I couldn't have because it cost too much! I told Daddy all about the hat as he ate his lunch. Miss Flossie Henderson, then our milliner, let me take the hat home for Daddy to see. When he got home that evening and found me sitting in the living room, dressed up within "an inch of my life," he agreed that it was "a beautiful hat and a most capable little gold digger under it."

"You may keep the hat," Daddy pontificated, "provided you are very good for a very long time; and I don't want to hear any more complaints from your mother about the way you tease your little sister."

Dorrace, my sword of Damocles, was ever threatening me; but I had agreed to be good, and was quite good for several days. I felt so grown-up in my new hat that teasing Dorrace was much beneath me, for a time.

On Sunday afternoons, in good weather, the four Fergusons would take long drives in the country. The colored man who drove during the week was off Sunday afternoon, so Daddy would do the driving. Mamma said he was a bad driver because he always wanted to go to out-of-the-way

places. Up creek beds and over dusty roads we would explore, much to Mamma's displeasure, for she did not like to mar the shine on her carriage. Those long rides were great larks for Dorrace and me. We got the feeling of adventure lying just around the corner in those horse-and-buggy days.

Some Sundays, provided we got an early start and everything was propitious, we would drive to Mamma's farm on Little River, eleven miles south of Temple. In the division of the Wallace estate her birthplace had come to her. The house where she was born was in sight of the flag station called Sparks, on the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad. These excursions to the farm were extra special treats to Dorrace and me, because we liked to see the growing crops. Those same visits gave Daddy and Mamma opportunity to check up on the business and management of the place.

Daddy had a light storm buggy, called a "doctor's buggy," that he used in bad weather. In the winter the black mud was so sticky and deep, even on Main Street, that we kept the horse and two buggies for years after we had automobiles. As youngsters, we would complain of the black mud of Temple, and the fact that we could not use the automobile for months at a time. To this Mamma would always retort:

"Yes, but if you will stick to the black land it will always stick to you." Mamma loved the black, waxy soil for the flourishing life that it gave to her flowers and her cotton crops. We girls were of the twentieth century, and must have had "wheels in our heads!"

Unfortunately, Dorrace and I were never taught the value of a dollar. We were not given an allowance so that we might learn to manage for ourselves. We had no cash, but we could treat the crowd, or buy anything we wanted, within reason, and say: "Please charge this to Daddy." This indulgence of a devoted father was bad training for his two little girls.

While Dorrace and I were growing up, the mothers of all our little friends played cards or worked in some of the new clubs that were then being organized. The era of the great American Clubwoman was just dawning upon the world. Mamma refused to take part in the clubs or the card games. This worried me no little. I did not like for my



mother to be different from the mothers of my friends. It was most embarrassing to me.

Our mother did a little work in the Methodist church, of which she was then a member, but her delicate health kept her at home most of the time. Her young family was her first and chief concern, and she did not feel that she had the time or the physical strength for outside activities. I shall never forget what Mamma told a friend who invited her to join the Colonial Dames:

"Thank you," Mamma said, "I appreciate your invitation, but I have no time to spend on ancestors. They are dead and buried. My chief concern is for those who are to follow them. Past history is a closed book. I am interested only in making history." Well — Mamma did make history!

Our mother was noted among our friends for her lack of tact and diplomacy. Later in life I often tried to prevail on Daddy to remonstrate with Mamma about her sharp words, but Daddy never gave any quarter to anyone against Mamma. He would just look at me and say:

"I only hope you make as fine a woman as your mother is!"

I often think back over what Mamma used to tell us about our father. Her love for him and her faith in his ability were consuming. She would tell us he was the most brilliant lawyer in Texas — that his business ability far surpassed that of any other man of his day. Some of her remarks must have been quite amusing to Daddy, and some quite embarrassing when she expressed herself in public, which she never hesitated to do.

With the move to Temple, Mamma seemed to change. She caught a vision of what Daddy was working for before she realized it. Daddy's actions always followed well-considered, mature thought, while Mamma's came from intuition, and what must have been Divine guidance. I have often pondered about my parents. Which was the leader? Which one the follower? They were different in every respect, and yet they were one. Mamma believed unshakably in her Jim, and there is no doubt that her faith and confidence carried him over many rough spots.

I now pass from the sublime to the tragically ridiculous.

As we grew up Dorrace and I experienced all the usual children's diseases, but now, it was Daddy's turn to eclipse us both. One afternoon he came home with a high fever and terrific nausea. All medicines failed to reduce his raging temperature. For eight or ten days Mamma hovered over him day and night. Dr. Barton came every day, but he had never seemed to be quite sure about the cause of this stubborn illness.

"It may be typhoid fever," he puzzled, "but I can't be sure just yet; we'll just have to wait and see what develops."

The fever did finally subside, and after Daddy had been clear of it several days, he demanded one morning that he be allowed to go to the bank for only one hour to attend to some very important business. Because of his weakened condition after the fever, Mamma pleaded with him to allow the doctor to look him over before he left the house. To humor her, he consented.

As Dr. Barton entered the door of Daddy's room, he said to Mamma: "Turn the covers back; I want to see his feet." On the soles of Daddy's feet were angry-looking, pink spots. Striving not to alarm Mamma, Dr. Barton smiled and said:

"I have been afraid of this all along; your husband has smallpox."

His words struck terror to our hearts. Dorrace and I were hustled out of the room; everyone on the place was vaccinated. The yardman was sent posthaste to get Mammy Jane, a colored woman who was a specialist in nursing smallpox. In those days she had almost steady work nursing the dread disease in Temple. Thanks to her knowledge of how to handle it, Daddy had no scars on his face or body. Twice each day, after opening each abscess with a needle, she bathed him in warm water in which bichloride of mercury had been dissolved. This treatment prevented itching and ultimate scarring.

Daddy's chief worry was that his family might have caught smallpox from him. In his eagerness to protect us he would not wait to see if our vaccinations were going to take, and, after three days, he had the entire family and the servants vaccinated again. Both vaccinations on poor "Aunt Laura" took, and Mamma's went to the bone. We were all



much sicker with our arms than Daddy was with his smallpox.

Daddy never knew where he had been exposed to the disease. "Aunt Laura," who had an opinion on all subjects and never failed to express it, was positive that:

"Mista Jim got dat smallpox when he paid off dem Mexkin cotton pickers down on de farm."

Dorrace and I were told we must not go into Daddy's room, nor even upstairs. Dorrace, as usual, obeyed. I was deathly afraid of catching smallpox, but I had a consuming desire to see what Daddy looked like.

One afternoon, when the house quieted down for a siesta, I stole up the front stairs, through the guest room and out on the upstairs gallery. Daddy's room gave onto this gallery, and it was easy to peep through the window at him. He was a sight to behold! He saw me, and yelled what he would do to me if I didn't get downstairs and stay downstairs! But I saw him!

All the known diseases raged every winter in Temple. Mamma had a friend who had lost a daughter with diphtheria; consequently, Mamma lived in mortal fear of our having it too. Because it was believed that the child had contracted the disease at the circus, Mamma lectured us on the hazard of infection when the circus came to town. She bought us off with promises of future treats. Daddy also wanted to go to the circus, but in the interest of peace he said nothing.

After much conniving and maneuvering, I arranged to get a little money, and also to be allowed to go play with a little girl who lived only three blocks from where the circus was showing. The rest was easy. Of course, because of my scanty funds, I had to miss the main show; but I had enough money to see a couple of sideshows, buy a bag of peanuts, and enjoy the circus atmosphere in general. My little friend and I were playing along the midway when we confronted Daddy coming out of the big tent! Caught red-handed on the diphtheria-breeding grounds, he thought fast. He explained that there was a Russian cotton buyer in town who had never seen a circus; he thought it was his duty to take this benighted foreigner to see the show. I assured Daddy that

it was perfectly all right with me, and if he would agree not to tell on me, I wouldn't tell on him. We kept our secret untill all danger of contagion was over.

Mamma's great fear of accidents and contagious disease was always a damper on her enjoying life. She never took a chance. She was so extremely careful of our health and welfare that we were often goaded to ask her, "Who wants to live forever, anyway?"

As a child I wanted a saddle horse. Mamma was afraid I might fall off the horse and break my neck. I was not allowed to have a horse. Mamma bought mechanical toys for me, and various things to take the place of a horse, but I was not content. I wanted a horse! The result was that when she was not looking, I rode all the horses that belonged to my friends, and came near breaking my neck.

Ruth McCelvey had a horse named "Star," and Ruth and I rode double all the time. One crisp day Star was "feeling his oats." As he galloped around the corner at Ninth and French Avenue, I lost my balance and off I went, cracking my cranium on the streetcar track. Mamma never knew that I nursed a knot on my head for days.

One day, much to my joy, I found what I thought would be a compromise between a horse and Mamma's conservatism. I found a man who would let me keep his donkey for its feed. Oh, joy! Oh, bliss! The initial cost was nil, and certainly a donkey was safe. I brought my treasure home and turned him into the lot with Mamma's pet carriage horse, Prince, and then went to break the news to Mamma. A terrific neighing and racket in the lot sent me flying back. A fight! The donkey had bitten a piece out of Prince's neck before the yardman could separate them. That was the end of the scheme!

Oh, well, automobiles were beginning to take the place of horses, anyway. Because Daddy had fired a locomotive for a time, he was prejudiced against the gasoline engine! He said the steam car was the only automobile. He purchased a White Steamer, hired a chauffeur and was learning to drive it. I shall never forget one time when he and I sneaked off alone in the car. We took only a short drive over the hill



north of Temple, but we "caught it" from Mamma when we returned.

Daddy was progressing nicely with his driving when a tragic accident occurred.

One cold, windy morning Daddy and some of his business associates started to a farm a few miles north of Temple to look at some sheep. A norther was blowing, and the wind can blow on that prairie! On the road they met a friend who was out of gasoline. Owen Calhoun, our chauffeur, said he could let them have some. Daddy questioned whether Owen should draw off fuel without first extinguishing the pilot light. Owen assured him it could be done safely. As he turned on the gas, the pressure in the tank blew flaming gasoline all over him.

Down the road, a human torch, Owen ran, with the Texas norther fanning the flames. Daddy was right behind him, shouting to him to stop. When Daddy caught up with him and rolled him in the dirt to extinguish the fire, it was too late. Owen lived twenty-one days; in his delirious agony he talked of nothing but the loss of the car. For months after this horrible experience Daddy wouldn't get into an automobile, and he never learned to drive one.

When I was about ten years old, Mamma told me she had suffered with chronic appendicitis as long as she could bear it; for eight or nine years she had been having attacks. Because she faced the possibility of leaving her two little girls to a stepmother, she would never consent to an operation. Now, she was compelled to undergo one. She said:

"The severity of these attacks has driven me to decide to have an operation. Before I go under the knife, there are some things I want to tell you: a few mysteries of life that I feel I should explain to you now."

Mamma was born in the age of innocence, and came out in the nineties, and it was hard for her to talk frankly to me about the mysteries of life. She floundered and "beat the devil around the bush" at great length; she did her embarrassed best to make things plain; but when she had finished, life was a greater mystery to me than it had been before she talked to me. However, she came through the appendectomy with less discomfort, I am sure.

On the whole, the family life of the Fergusons was unusually happy. As Mamma often said: "It takes two to make a quarrel, and Jim won't fuss with me."

Our evenings were generally spent at home, unless there was a real stage production playing in Temple. In those days, before the movies were developed, we had a great many good, legitimate stage productions during the winter and early spring. Daddy always loved the theater; four tickets were purchased to everything that came to Temple, and, although Dorrace and I were quite young, we were allowed to go. I remember how sleepy I used to get before the performance was over.

The old frame opera house in Temple was a colossal firetrap, heated with two enormous red-hot stoves, and it did finally go up in flames. Years later, when Louis Mann played in Austin and was our guest at the Governor's Mansion, he recalled the old Temple opera house, the noise from the stoking of the stoves, and the gigantic, full-figured masques that adorned the wall on each side of the stage. He said:

"Those tremendous figures haunted me like ghosts for weeks after a performance in Temple."

One cold night, when we had settled down to sleep after enjoying a show at the opera house, the fire bells awoke us. The old tinderbox had at last ignited, and was lighting the heavens for miles around. A strong south wind was blowing sparks onto our house and the entire north side of town. We were frightened and heartbroken over the destruction of the opera house, but took comfort in the fact that Daddy had recently had our roof coated with fireproof paint. For almost three hours the heat of the fire sent up great chunks of the burning buildings, which the strong wind carried northward. The crackling of this erupting volcano could be heard all over town.

Daddy dressed and went to the fire, but, fearing for the safety of our house, returned to watch the falling sparks. After all danger appeared to be over, we went to bed, around four o'clock.

Later, I was awakened by a dazzling light; I sat up and looked out the north window. Dr. Murphy's house, across



the street from our house, was in flames. Before I could call Daddy, the neighborhood was aroused by a man yelling "FIRE!" as he smashed in the door of the Murphy dwelling.

Dry leaves in a valley on the roof of the house had caught from a spark. The entire block to the north was razed. The wind saved our house, though the heat blistered the north side, despite the water thrown on it. That terrible night left a great fear of fire in me, and, of course, in Mamma. Temple had such spectacular fires in those days! The insurance companies considered Temple one of the "hottest" towns in the state.

In the evenings at home, in the family circle around the reading lamp, Mamma would hear Dorrace's lessons and Daddy would hear mine. I had no trouble with geography and arithmetic, but when it came to spelling — Daddy would become almost despondent over me. He had been quite a lad in the country spelling bees in his young days, and as I was considered more like him than his other daughter was, the fact that he couldn't teach me to spell worried him no little. One night I had two words, "marbles" and "rabbits" in my lesson; I insisted on spelling them "marbits" and "rabbles." Daddy drilled me patiently, but I simply could not learn to spell those two words correctly.

One morning at the breakfast table he was shaming me about my spelling when "Aunt Laura" chimed in:

"Doan yo worry dat chile, Mista Jim, 'bout her spellin'. She can't hep it. When dey grabbed fer spellin' in dis family she wah jest asleep."

With lessons done, Mamma would take up her needlework, while Daddy read his paper, apparently unaware that Dorrace and I were plaiting or tying ribbons on his long forelock of brown hair. Sometimes we would top it off with our hats or bonnets. We might put everything on him that we could find to make him look ridiculous, but our giggling never seemed to disturb his wonderful powers of concentration. Daddy never seemed to have a nerve in his body. He was patient and calm all the time. Our masterpiece finished, we would bring him the hand mirror so that he might view our work. He would look, amiably, smile and say: "What will you brats think up next?"

More than one person has remarked that my father had marvelous powers of concentration. Dorrace and I taught him to tune out the world around him. That same calm carried him unshaken through many a storm in public life. His head was often bludgeoned by fate, but no one was ever to see it bowed. No one but his children ever managed to tie a hair ribbon on Jim Ferguson's leonine mane.



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## CHAPTER IX

# Daddy's First Race

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IN 1913 the four Fergusons were leading a life so typical of the prosperous small-town American that I suppose the sociologists would tag us as *Americana* — *pre-1914*; *Species: Banker, wife, and two female young*; *Habitat: Central Texas Town*. None of us knew we were *Americana*. We had been Americans nearly three hundred years.

There was no reason to expect the president of the Temple State Bank to upset this tranquillity when he was forty-two years old. A banker might build a bigger and better house as the styles changed, and a bigger and more modern bank, but he stayed put until he had white whiskers, a gold-headed cane and plans for a Greek mausoleum in the local Woodlawn.

The horse-and-buggy-days were dying; we had electricity and telephones; and we had flying machines at the State Fair! A comfortable, complacent, overstuffed administration at Washington had just given way to Professor Wilson with his messianic message on dusting off our musty dream of democracy. The banker and leading citizen class in general regretted the loss of Mr. Taft, who had let well enough alone.

At the end of 1913, something that had been brooding under Jim Ferguson's broad hat began to hatch. I think it was the pioneer urge to find new fields, to conquer a new land where there was no new land. The banker with the gold watchchain across his broadcloth vest couldn't saddle

up and ride westward. Jim had gone as far as the Golden Gate twenty-five years before, and had come back to Texas disappointed in the promised land. Now, he was a happy family man with nowhere to go, and the blood of the Bible-toting old Squire and the Fighting Parson fomented in him the courage of the Indian-boiling Widow Woodson, along with some ideas of his own.

I was too young (not yet thirteen) to realize that something was stirring in Daddy; something that was to take us out of the tranquil Victorian house with a cupola on North Seventh Street in Temple into an uneasy edifice called the Governor's Mansion in Austin, Texas. As I look back now, coming events did cast long shadows. Daddy would often sit and think until Mamma would say to him: "Stop giving me that Ferguson stare; a penny for your thoughts, Jim." Out of his deep reverie he would emerge with a broad smile, as much as to say:

"Yes, my darling; but you wouldn't understand!"

Some evenings he would sit by the hour with scratch tablet and pencil, writing and figuring. At first, these problems were a farmer's: If one sow can have fourteen pigs in one year, how can I, by better care and more scientific feeding, induce nature to make her have twice that many pigs? Assuming that he could accomplish this feat, Daddy would then build the most marvelous air castles in his hog heaven, or equally fantastic green pastures of sheep, cattle and farm crops. He never looked on the dark side of any plan, nor did he ever consider possible disadvantages; his was always a rosy picture. Daddy should have been a charter member, if not the founder, of the Optimist Club.

Before bedtime he would almost always deliver us a little talk on what his tablet and pencil had been reforming and improving. One evening his talk was on the subject of business in government, and the effect of existing state laws on the lives of the tenant farmers. He said:

"It is my opinion that Texas should have a governor who has been a successful farmer, stock raiser and business man. I have this evening drafted a letter to my friend Tom Henderson, of Cameron, urging him to run for governor. He is well qualified to give Texas a business administra-



tion, and he knows the needs of the future and the farmers."

Next day the letter was posted to Mr. Henderson, and carbon copies were sent to the leading state daily papers. Mr. Henderson's reply was, in effect, that he was too old to embark on a strenuous campaign for office, but he urged Jim Ferguson to run. He labeled Daddy the "Ideal man: farmer, laborer, lawyer, banker, business man, who understands the problems of each and all."

In retrospect, it seems obvious that the whole thing was a clever piece of political strategy on Daddy's part. He and the rest of the family bitterly denied that, but I prefer to give him credit for shrewd planning.

Letters by the hundreds poured in from all over the state urging Jim Ferguson to run for governor. Yes, I believe he was drafted, but I also believe that he opened the door that let in the draft. Why not?

In going over the Texas daily papers of that period, I learn that, after lengthy consideration of the matter, Mr. and Mrs. James E. Ferguson decided to spend the money they had saved for a trip to Europe on Mr. Ferguson's campaign for governor. If you knew my parents, this story is very amusing. Neither of them ever had any idea of crossing the ocean; both were afraid of boats and deep water. Perhaps their colonial forebears were too seasick when they came over the big water. No, the story of their renounced European tour was just good copy.

On November 15, 1913, Daddy announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for governor of Texas, subject to the primaries of 1914. And that was for his family the end of an epoch of tranquillity. The battle was on! I admit I was thrilled and excited.

Daddy's lifelong friend, John G. McKay, became campaign manager. A better campaign organizer never lived.

Daddy now spent many days and winter evenings writing his platform and his opening speech. When he had finished the platform, he read it aloud to us; and, although I remember that it was entirely over my head, we were all as proud as a new grandmother. It dealt with regulation of farm rents, prison reform, improvement of educational facilities, bonded warehouses; it opposed reduction of railroad rates and advo-

cated the putting of the state on a cash basis. This platform was printed by the thousands of copies in pamphlet form. On the front cover was a photograph of the candidate, and on the back cover a map of Texas, with an arrow pointing to Temple. Under the map were lines that ran something like:

A State in the Heart of the World —  
A Town in the Heart of the State —  
A Candidate in the Heart of the People.

The text of the platform is not entirely a museum piece, even thirty years later.

*First:* Until such time as all state institutions and state finances are put on a sound business basis all other matters of legislation should be put aside.

Realizing the imperative need of this policy and recognizing the attempt of certain candidates to ride into office on the prohibition issue to the exclusion and detriment of the pressing business demands of the state, and in order that the issue may be clearly made, I hereby pledge myself, if elected governor, to promptly and surely veto to the extent of my power any legislation which may be passed, through pro or anti influence, pertaining to or dealing with the liquor question in any manner or form.

Present laws are sufficient. I ask no man to surrender his views on prohibition, but the deplorable condition of our state institutions and finances makes a graver condition. It can only be met by ceasing for a time at least the factional strife which is destroying the state.

Let us have more business and less talk. Instead of wrangling over the question of whether man shall drink, let us consider for a time how he and his loved ones may get something to eat and something to wear. Three years ago I voted for submission of the prohibition question to the people. An election was held and by a clear majority the issue was decided against prohibition. Frequent elections on the question will only bring renewed agitation and strife. I therefore am opposed to any re-submission of the question at this time.

*Second:* I am heartily in favor of any legislation look-



ing to the improvement and advancement of our public schools, the A. & M. College and our State University. In the matter of appropriations for such purpose I would only be restricted by the ability of the state to pay and an economical expenditure of the public money. If we get our money's worth, let us buy all the education we can pay for. And let us begin with the little schoolhouse on the country road.

*Third:* No candidate for governor who has not had ample opportunity to give the question serious attention can safely outline any intelligent plan for the management of the state penitentiaries. If elected governor, I pledge my best efforts as a business man to put all state prisons on a self-sustaining basis. If it would not involve the state in loss, I am in favor of using our convict labor to build permanent public roads.

*Fourth:* I am opposed to any reduction in rates charged by railroads.

Railroads are entitled to earn a fair return on their investment.

If railroad investment is not assured of a fair return on the investment, Texas will wait long in the future before other railroads are built.

Again, if rates are reduced, the railroads will use such action as a pretext to decrease the wages of organized labor and will use it as an excuse for their failure to furnish proper service to the patient public. I favor such firm and prompt regulation of the railroads by legislation, and by our railroad commission, as will relieve the people from the discomfort of bad crossings, late trains, delayed shipments and discourteous employees. The passenger who pays three cents a mile is entitled to a seat. The shipper who is forced to pay extra because he does not unload the car is certainly entitled to reimbursement when no car is furnished for him to load.

A study of this question is good for all concerned and will lead to a better understanding of the relation which should exist between the roads and the public.

*Fifth:* I favor the establishment of a system of bonded warehouses with power to issue negotiable receipts, all

under the sanction and supervision of the state. The demand for this legislation is apparent to everyone.

A gradual marketing of farm products can never be brought about unless some general plan of storage is available. Not one farmer in fifty has, or is able to purchase, facilities to store and house through the winter months all of the cotton or grain which he can raise.

Yet unless they have this facility our entire crop must go on the markets at one time to prevent its destruction or damage from wind and storm. The bad effect of enforced marketing on the price of farm products in Texas, and in the South causes the loss of more money every year than any other one thing.

*Sixth:* Perhaps of greater moment than all other questions is the question of land tenure and land rents. History reveals that the fall of all nations was closely connected with, if not directly caused by, the failure to promptly meet and equitably adjust the division of land production between landlord and tenant.

Let us not be deceived into thinking that Texas is not confronted with this question right now.

Until a short time ago, a fourth of the cotton and a third of the grain crops was considered for fifty years in Texas as the equitable rent which the tenant should pay for the use of the land rented. Under this rule, Texas has prospered and grown from one financial triumph to another.

But lately with the appearance of high-priced lands, the argument has become quite popular that rents should go higher to keep pace with the earning power of money.

As a result it is becoming almost a custom to demand and collect of the tenant a bonus in addition to the usual rents or to demand a cash rent exceeding the customary rent. It is true that for a few years we have had an era of high prices and so far the tenant has been able to pay the high prices and so far the tenant has been able to pay the increased rent and live without any great inconvenience.

But it must be borne in mind that an acre of land that now sells for \$100 per acre does not produce any more cotton or corn than it did when it sold for \$30 per acre.

As perhaps a majority of our rural citizenship are tenants, it is folly to argue that the good of society is not



involved in the matter of material increase in rents. An increase in rents necessarily impairs the ability of the tenant to raise and educate his family. Therefore, it must follow that in such proportions as rents go up, comfort and education, so far as the tenant is concerned, go down.

Therefore, as a solution to this vexing problem and to settle the strife which seems brewing, I, if elected governor, will urge upon the legislature to bring about by statute or constitutional amendment as may be proper the passage of a law that will make the collection of rent in amount in excess of one-fourth of the value of cotton or one-third the value of grain crops, usury, the penalty for which shall be a forfeiture of double the amount of rent collected to be recovered in any court of competent jurisdiction; provided, that the landlord may collect rent in any amount equal to one-half the value of all crops where the landlord furnishes all the tools, implements, feed and teams with which the tenant makes the crop.

Such a law is not only essentially progressive, but necessary. It involves not only the good of society, but the life of the government.

I shall be glad to debate and defend this legislation with any reputable candidate for governor.

In the meantime, I suggest that the people inquire of candidates for the legislature how they stand on this question. This question has to be met sooner or later. The very foundation of the nation is involved in this law.

Land owners need not be alarmed at this announcement, as I will be able to show you where such a law is to your interest as well as your tenant. I will be able to show that the present high values of land can be maintained only by maintaining the standard of tenant citizenship.

JAMES E. FERGUSON

When Daddy had finished writing his opening speech, he then had to commit it to memory. This is where Mamma and I came into play. By the hour we would take turns holding the manuscript while he recited. Of course, there is always the best phrase or the best word to express a given idea; however, Daddy never memorized a speech word by word. Often he would stray far from the written speech in my hand.

When I corrected him too often he would scold: "It is ideas I want down pat in my head, and not just words. Perhaps I can work out a better way to express my thoughts than I have written on that paper."

My first experience in helping Daddy learn a speech had been with one he made to the state bankers' convention more than a year prior to his announcement for governor. The speech to the bankers went off without a mistake, but when Daddy came home he told us he'd had a nervous rigor about an hour before he was to speak. He had been trained in the Salado Debating Society, and had harangued many juries, to say nothing of county-wide Confederate Reunions, but the illustrious bankers' convention was not just "home folks."

Many years later, during one of Mamma's administrations as governor, an urgent request came for Daddy to speak at a Confederate Reunion. He told Mamma this was simply out of the question; he was too busy. Her reply was: "I think you should go and make the speech. You owe it to them."

"Why do I owe it to them?" he retorted.

"Because when you were a struggling young speaker you used to practice on them every time you got the chance. Now that you are considered a good speaker and they still want you, I think you should go."

Daddy went.

In March 1914, there was great excitement in the family and among our friends in Bell County over the opening campaign speech. Various towns and counties invited Daddy to honor them by delivering the speech in their midst. The first "Ferguson for Governor" club had been organized in Hill County, with a membership of more than a hundred. In consequence, it was decided to open the campaign at Blum, then a farming village of three hundred people, located in Hill County. Three special trains, with two brass bands, brought us to Blum about eleven o'clock on the morning of March 21, 1914. Lunch was served by the wives, sisters and sweethearts of the "Ferguson for Governor" Club. I recall that it was delicious. There were, of course, no female members of the club, for that was before women



had gained the vote; woman's legal status then was that of slave, convict or insane asylum inmate.

A tremendous crowd gathered in the little town, gay with flags, bunting and blaring bands. To me, a child of thirteen, it was like going to the circus and riding on the elephant in the parade. Ever since then, I have loved the razzle-dazzle of a political rally.

A speakers' platform had been erected in the street in front of the stores. In a light snow, most unusual in that part of Texas, Daddy stood bareheaded for almost two hours, expounding his ideas of what Texas needed. There was no scurrying to cover from the weather. I have seen a thousand political gatherings since, but never one so attentive to the speaker; and there was no one in that Blum crowd more attentive than I was. While Daddy was speaking, I was in mental agony. I knew the written speech almost word for word. When he deviated from the text, which he did frequently, I would chew my fingernails in despair; he might wander off talking about local problems and when he attempted to return to his prepared speech, forget where he left off! I have since marveled at the weight of responsibility for Daddy that I so earnestly took upon my shoulders at thirteen. I am sure Daddy would have laughed at the maternal instinct that was pulling at my heartstrings had he known how I took his political career to heart. I suppose most elder daughters are maternally earnest.

At the beginning of the campaign there were several candidates in the race for governor. One by one they dropped out, leaving only Daddy and Tom Ball, of Houston, to scrap it out.

Although Daddy had been a lifelong anti-prohibitionist, he had never been a drinking man; it was rare that he ever drank a glass of beer. He had announced that as governor, to stop the waste of the legislature's valuable time when it should be considering problems more vital to the state, he would veto any liquor legislation, wet or dry. Tom Ball was heralded by his sponsors as one sent to save the state from Jim Ferguson and the wicked anti-prohibitionists. I shall never forget the furore in the family when the opposition came out with the statement to the effect that Jim Ferguson

was so bad a citizen that his own mother-in-law was not supporting his candidacy.

When Granny Wallace arrived at our house she was so angry that she was inarticulate.

"Jim," she finally got out, "I want to make a statement to the press refuting this despicable falsehood."

With pencil and paper they sat down to prepare her statement. When they had finished, Daddy asked her if that was all she wanted to say. Granny's eyes flashed:

"I suppose that is all I can say. I regret that I am a lady, and can't call him by his right name!"

Dog days came on and the mud-slinging grew hotter; good friends quit speaking to each other, and feeling really ran high. In short, it was a typical political year, and "a good time was had by all." The cyclonic intensity of a Texas campaign can frighten outsiders, but, to the people of the state, it has a lot of humor. One of the choicest stories told in that campaign was started in East Texas.

An old farmer couldn't make up his mind to vote for either Tom Ball or Jim Ferguson. He went to hear each candidate lambaste the other one, and he was still undecided. Finally, he planned to go fishing on election day and avoid voting for either candidate. He reached the river, dropped in his line and began to fish. Pretty soon a big old bullfrog on the opposite bank in deep-throated tones began to urge:

"Tom Ball! Tom Ball! Tom Ball!"

"My goodness," the farmer said to himself, "maybe I should have voted for Tom. But I came fishin' and I stay fishin'."

Again the fisherman moved down the river, and again the same thing happened.

"Aye, ganny," pondered our friend, "Ball must be pretty good. Even the big bullfrogs is callin' fer him. I better go back and vote!"

It looked like rain. On his way home the fisherman took a short cut across a sweet gum flat. When he reached the flat, he was greeted by the shrill, chirping voices of thousands of little green tree frogs, all chanting in perfect unison:

"Ferguson — Ferguson — Ferguson — Ferguson!"



"Well!" mused our friend now. "Looks powerful like the little fellers are fer Ferguson, an' only a few of the big boys fer Ball. After all, I'm a poor man. Maybe this is Providence a-guidin' me. I guess I'll stay with my own crowd of little fellers an' vote for Ferguson." So he did.

In this vast state of Texas a candidate has widely varying problems to meet and questions to answer. In a town in West Texas our man was met at the train by a group of his friends, all greatly distressed over the fact that the local opposition was charging that Jim Ferguson had been rocked in a Roman Catholic cradle, and had supported in Temple a night school for working boys that was taught by a Catholic priest. In those days in West Texas, to be a Roman Catholic, or to have Catholic affiliations was considered nothing short of treason. The Ferguson supporters were distressed beyond words, but Ferguson soothed them with a promise to quash the charges when he spoke that evening.

In every speech Daddy first outlined the principal planks of his platform, and discussed at length the broad issues of the campaign; local issues and charges were taken up last. His friends sat through the long speech, worried and wondering how Daddy could answer the charge without offending good Catholics, who predominated on the Mexican border and in Southwest Texas. Daddy knew that was one reason why the issue had been raised by his foes.

Finally, in a quiet, reasoning tone, he took up the charge that, because his mother had been educated in the Ursuline convent in Galveston, he had been rocked "in a Catholic cradle."

"My Grandmother Fitzpatrick died when my mother was a baby," he explained. "My grandfather could not care for a young baby in a new land. The Catholic Sisters took my mother, and gave her loving care and a good education. For this kindness I am deeply grateful to the Ursuline Sisters, and I offer no apology to anyone. My mother did not become a Catholic, and, furthermore, she married a Methodist preacher. I have never been in a Catholic church in my life."

Daddy went on: "As to the charges that I pay for school books, house rent, light and fuel bills for a night school for

working boys, a school taught by Father Heckman, I plead guilty. Several years ago Father Heckman, a Roman Catholic priest, brought to my attention the need in Temple for a night school for working boys. He offered to teach the school if I would pay all other bills. Upon investigation, I found there was such a need and, in consequence, we set up our school. No Protestant ministers saw this need; if they did see it, they made no offer to help meet the need. The same crowd that tells you I am a Catholic fails to tell you how much I contribute to the Methodist church, in which my father was a minister for many years. If paying these small bills which help in giving these working boys a little education makes me a Roman Catholic, then I plead guilty; but I offer no apology to anybody."

The Democratic Party was in power nationally. Woodrow Wilson had honored three Texans with cabinet positions, and Colonel E. M. House, of Austin, Texas, was probably nearer the President than than was any other adviser.

It was said that this group of Texans in Washington advised President Wilson to support Tom Ball, and leave the rest to them; and that, evidently believing that their influence in Texas was all-powerful, they told the President that Tom Ball would be governor.

The weather and the campaign grew warmer day by day. There were charges and countercharges. After Daddy had made one hundred and fifty-odd speeches, from the Red River to the Rio Grande, we literally dragged him off the train at Temple at four o'clock on the morning of July 25. His last scheduled speech had been made at Itasca the day before. The train had stopped at every station between Itasca and Temple in order that he might speak to the crowds gathered to greet him. Physically spent, his voice about gone, he still must speak to his own townspeople, some of whom had waited at the station until that hour of the morning to greet him on his return.

That sort of outpouring of friendship fires a man in public life with the desire to be worthy of such devotion. All may be fair in love, war and American politics, but I cannot be cynical about the loyalty that all three bring out in plain, simple people. Every Ferguson campaign has



only strengthened this feeling — that plain folks who cannot be regimented will be running their own affairs in Texas long after any current political menaces, the *isms* and *wasms*, are only bloody chapters in Texas history.

Tom Ball's defeat was a great embarrassment to the Texas big boys in the Wilson cabinet. Their chagrin was comic.

After Daddy was governor he went to Washington for a conference with the President on Texas affairs. Daddy said: "President Wilson seemed pleased that I understood that he had been ill-advised in throwing his support to Tom Ball, and that I did not hold it against him."

For the Fergusons, the bitterness of the campaign was swallowed up in Daddy's 45,600-vote victory over Tom Ball. But the defeated opposition could not forget so quickly; especially was this true of the United States Senator, Joseph Weldon Bailey, a militant Ball supporter. Tom Ball had been defeated, but Joe Bailey was not licked. In a belligerent state of mind, he packed his bag and entrained for the Democratic State Convention at El Paso, Texas. Senator Bailey was of brilliant intellect and persuasive tongue. Jim Ferguson was untried, and to the seasoned politician an "unknown quantity." Bailey proposed to fight Ferguson straight through the convention, despite the popular vote.

General John J. Pershing was then a colonel, stationed near El Paso. He knocked at the door of our hotel suite, and Daddy answered the knock. Colonel Pershing introduced himself; in short, clipped phrases he said that he understood there was likely to be trouble on the convention floor, and that he had come to offer his personal aid if it should be needed. Daddy thanked him and accepted his offer. That valiant warrior was on hand when the convention assembled, and remained by Daddy's side on the platform throughout the sessions. We were told later that Pershing disliked Joe Bailey because of a fight between Bailey and Pershing's father-in-law, Senator Warren, on the floor of the United States Senate.

Many of our staunchest friends had been strong supporters of Senator Bailey in his race for the Senate. These friends were now warning "The People's Choice" of what

he had to go up against when he met Joe Bailey in debate. Some of them were so skeptical of Daddy's ability to hold his own against Bailey that they advised him to give up the convention to the senator. What could a mere, small-town lawyer-banker say to match the great Joe Bailey, they argued.

"No, I'll not give up," Jim Ferguson told them; "Bailey might lick me, but I won't give up!"

Jim was nervous when Joe Bailey started his speech with a sneering attack on the \$30,000 Ferguson campaign expenditure, leading on to a vitriolic tirade on Daddy's promise that he would veto any and all liquor legislation. Bailey, a violent anti-prohibitionist, was agitating to keep alive the liquor issue, while Ferguson wanted it dropped for more important questions.

Daddy related to us later: "As Bailey continued to talk, my nervousness left me; I soon realized that I could answer his every charge."

Bailey proposed a number of resolutions. The main ones were: opposition to national prohibition, opposition to woman suffrage, and regulations and limits on campaign expenditures. The last proposal was his undoing. Bailey let the fence down and Jim Ferguson rushed in to get at him.

When Daddy arose to address the convention, he was a different man from the Jim Ferguson who had entered the hall earlier. He had found the holes in Joe Bailey's armor, and he no longer feared the able political warrior. Bailey had previously defended Senator Lorimer, of Illinois, in the contest over Lorimer's election. The charge against the Illinois senator had been that his campaign expense had been excessive.

Arguing that Senator Bailey was not consistent, Jim Ferguson shattered Bailey's attack on the Ferguson campaign expenses. He then explained convincingly his reasons for opposing any and all liquor legislation, be it wet or dry.

Daddy argued that for much too long a time Texas had been divided into two camps over the wet and dry issue. The fight had been so bitter, so all-consuming, that people in public life were unable to accomplish much-needed reform in the social and economic system of Texas; that all other issues were pushed into the background while the two



factions battled over prohibition. Jim Ferguson's stand was, that in order to overcome this condition and get on with the state's business, he would veto all liquor legislation, both pro and anti.

The convention defeated all of Bailey's resolutions by a majority of five hundred and fifty votes.

Many years later, when Daddy and Senator Bailey had become friends and were fighting on the same side of things, Joe Bailey told Daddy that he realized Jim Ferguson was not the ignoramus he had been told he was to meet; before "Farmer Jim" had talked ten minutes he knew the truth. He said: "I found I had caught a wildcat, and I couldn't turn him loose."

When I recall now how Daddy and Joe Bailey laughed later over that bitter fight, I realize that any citizen who takes too seriously the heated utterances of a politician on the platform is plain stupid. To me, a girl of thirteen, this was the "battle of the ages, to settle all problems and let history cease making." I soon learned that politics makes strange bedfellows, and that history had only started to make for the Fergusons.

The repercussions of that Bailey-Ferguson fight on the Democratic convention floor were felt in all the social gatherings outside the convention hall. At every tea party for the ladies unpleasantries arose between friends of the two vitriolic orators. I had not yet learned to ignore these side-bar remarks.

I was not yet old enough to go out with young men. However, I loved to dance, and Mamma consented to my going to the country club one evening with Mr. and Mrs. Charlie McDonald. Because I was the daughter of the next governor of Texas, the young swains made quite a fuss over "Miss Ouida." I returned to the hotel in a state of enchantment, like a princess in a fairy tale besieged by knightly suitors. This trance was rudely shattered.

After I had passed through into my bedroom, I heard Daddy dismiss several men who had hung around with us at the convention with the words: "Boys, you may go, now; I'm going to bed."

I was quite a politician by this time, and I chided him

for telling the men to go home. He laughed, and then told me that Mayor Kelley had thought it wise to place a guard of plainclothes men over us during the convention fight, and that the men had been hanging around, not out of dumb devotion to the cause of Jim Ferguson, but to protect us. The horrible thought that somebody might have shot Daddy, or have done him physical violence so harassed me that I didn't close my eyes that night.

That was my first flash of the hot light that beats upon any seat of power. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" had been, up to that day, only a sentence in the grammar to parse and diagram.

The day after the convention ended, I had another lesson in what it would mean to be a governor's daughter. We were invited to attend a bullfight in Juarez, Mexico, across the Rio Grande. That would be exciting! One of the big battles of the Mexican revolution that had begun in 1910 had been fought in Juarez only a few weeks before. The quaint old town showed fresh scars of shot and shells.

We saw the jail jammed with unhappy losers in the game of politics, Mexican style. A woman in a pen was smoking a cigarette! I was shocked and horrified! I probably would have been more shocked if anyone had suggested then that I would ever taste the nasty weed, much less enjoy its aroma!

The bullfight was, of course, the most exciting, exotic experience of my life up to that time. Luckily, the matadors were experts and made their kills quickly, and clean; but when the blindfolded horses were disemboweled when the bulls gored them, several women in our party fainted. Sick as I was, I had to convey interest and gay appreciation while one bull, dedicated to me, was put through the ritual of death. I had to hold the matador's millinery, tossed up to me, the daughter of the next governor of Texas.

That bullfight was a symbol of much that I had to learn to endure with a smile. When things have gone dead wrong for me, I have wondered whether or not I was atoning for the life of that handsome, gallant, bewildered young *toro bravo*!

If I had refused the honor, it would have offended the Mexicans and have made me seem ludicrous. And Daddy's



girl, at thirteen, didn't want to be a "Sissy." A cow was a "critter," born to be killed and eaten. No Texan could believe that a cow had a soul . . . and so on! That didn't alter the truth; I was sick, at heart and at stomach!

I don't believe Daddy enjoyed that bullfight any more than I did. He was always so uncommonly kind to animals. But a governor, as I was to learn later, has to face worse things than bullfights . . . and with a smile! Politics takes a strong stomach.

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## CHAPTER X

# So Daddy Was Governor

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THE new governor and his family arrived in the capital city of Austin, Texas, late Sunday afternoon, January 17, 1915.

Our friend, Charlie Spradley, then a member of the Texas House of Representatives, stood on the landing of the great stairway in the Driskill Hotel in Austin and watched the Ferguson family enter. This is what he recalls:

"Governor Jim was tall and strong, a striking figure in his cutaway coat. His skin was fair, and under a shock of dark hair his grey eyes twinkled eagerly in anticipation of the task before him.

"Your mother was small, very thin, and looked quite delicate. She was beautifully dressed, and was most gracious when applause went up as you people entered the lobby. However, in demeanor, she was the antithesis of your father. His friendly acknowledgment of the reception was charged with push and with power, while your mother's was timid and retiring.

"Dorrace had a violin tucked under one arm, and her white Spitz dog, Sambo, was under the other. Still just a child, she seemed a bit sad over leaving her friends in Temple, while you, with your long, golden curls, seemed buoyant and happy over the prospect of your new home."

Our friend, Cecil Hull, the division superintendent of the Santa Fé Railroad in Temple, had brought us to Austin in his private car. It was my first ride in one, and by the



time we reached the crowded lobby of the Driskill, I felt almost as important as the ringmaster in the circus who comes out in his silk hat and tails and intones: "Layde-e-s and Gentle-men."

Mamma and Daddy had visited Governor and Mrs. O. B. Colquitt at the Mansion a few weeks before, but this triumphal entry into the capital city of Texas was the first time Dorrace and I had been to Austin.

I remember that Mamma and Daddy went to a dinner party that evening. Being sent to bed didn't bother Dorrace, for she was only ten years old; but being shelved when there was so much going on went terribly against the grain with me, for I was past fourteen.

Jesse Stevens, our chauffeur since the White Steamer tragedy, brought our automobile to Austin two days before the inauguration. On the Monday following our arrival on Sunday, Dorrace and I were allowed to go for a long drive over the city. I shall never forget the thrill of driving for the first time through the beautiful parks that are the Capitol grounds. There was already a touch of spring in the air, and, after the flat terrain of Temple, the hills surrounding Austin seemed majestic.

Tuesday, January 19, 1915, was Inauguration Day! At high noon Daddy was sworn into office by Associate Justice Nelson Phillips of the Texas Supreme Court in the historic House of Representatives Chamber in the Capitol.

Just before we started our march into the Chamber under the crossed sabers of the Sul Ross Volunteers from Texas A. and M. College, John L. Wroe, who was going to be Daddy's secretary, said to me: "I know this is the happiest, proudest moment of your life! I'm sure there is nothing that can happen to you in the future that could possibly eclipse this moment!"

For several years I believed he was right. It was indeed the first great, joyous experience of my life, but the sheer joy of Mamma's inauguration ten years later far eclipsed it. Dark clouds, trouble and sorrow develop appreciation of one's blessings. The political crucible in which we were tried burned away childish pride, but later, the bitter cup from

which we had drunk made Mamma's inauguration as governor the sweeter.

People came from all over Texas to the first Ferguson inauguration and the ball in the House of Representatives. I was awe-struck when I saw the decorations. The Speaker's stand was a grotto for the orchestra; an electric fountain played water over the background. Balloons, flags, potted ferns and bunting decorated the rest of the House, but that electric fountain was really something!

Before we left Temple, Will Banks' mother had called on Mamma and requested that her son William be allowed to escort me to the inaugural ball. Will was a student at the University of Texas, and my first real beau. Pressed in my book of memories are some of the flowers he sent to me for the occasion.

Mamma's gown for the ball was of soft, white satin, trimmed with real lace and seed pearls. In those days Mamma was wealthy in her own name, and she had not spared her purse for the event. Her gown was created by Mme. Grunder, of Louisville, Kentucky.

Dorrace and I wore shell pink crepe de chine dresses trimmed in shadow lace, the creations of Mrs. C. A. Trigg, of Temple. I carried a hemstitched handkerchief made from a scrap of my dress by my friend and geography teacher, Miss Murt McGillivary.

Daddy and Mrs. Colquitt, the wife of the outgoing governor, led the grand march. Next in line came Governor Colquitt and Mamma.

The next noon we moved from the hotel to the Governor's Mansion. Governor and Mrs. Colquitt were waiting to receive us when we arrived about twelve-thirty o'clock. Mrs. Colquitt had a hot dinner for us at which she and her family declined to join us, because they had accepted an engagement to dine with friends elsewhere. I remember we thought this quite odd, until we learned that it was the custom for the outgoing governor and his family to take their leave in this tactful manner. We were to remember it fondly, by contrast, when, in later years we returned to the Mansion.

Inauguration Day was the end of my simple childhood. Before we had fully realized what was happening, the Fer-



guson family had been transplanted from a quiet life into one of action and turmoil. After the inaugural ball I was, of course, a young lady in my own eyes, if not in Mamma's. At fourteen I was more concerned with the domestic and social scene than with statecraft.

Although Mamma had employed a secretary, the social demands on her proved almost too much for her frail constitution. Austin had no set protocol and, in consequence, it was hard to please everybody.

Mamma's first mistake was in failing to employ an Austin woman as secretary. Mrs. Snider was a genius for arranging beautiful parties, but she was not familiar with problems of society in the capital city. Austin, like most state capitals, is divided into three distinct social groups. The three sets mix about as amicably as strange bulldogs, always growling, backbiting and glaring at each other. No one will admit it, certainly, but it goes on just the same.

There is the old Austin set that smugly snubs the other two. There is the University group, who bask in their intellectual superiority, but who, for the sake of University appropriations, tolerate, and at times are very sweet to, the political group on Capitol Hill. The third group, the *Politicos*, arrive in Austin taking themselves very seriously; most of them are endowed with colossal ego, convinced that they have been sent by the people to save the State government from the other two groups, whom they call high-hat snobs.

Into this social and political whirlpool the Ferguson family sailed in January 1915, with not the remotest knowledge of how to steer through it.

My mother had never possessed, nor had she ever attempted to cultivate, the slightest tendency toward diplomacy. She was brutally frank and honest at all times. Mamma had a sense of duty as to what was expected of her, and, as the Governor's wife, she launched dutifully into a stream of entertaining; she soon found herself in troubled waters.

The first winter the Fergusons spent in Austin was extremely cold, and in those days the old colonial mansion, with its twenty-foot ceilings and enormous rooms, was not

steam-heated. On the at-home days, the first and third Tuesdays of each month, the butler arose an hour earlier than usual in order to start coal fires in the small grates in the two great drawing rooms. That, at least, was "Jeffersonian simplicity."

The odor of narcissus always brings fond recollections of those at-home days, when Mamma decorated the Mansion with the narcissus that bloomed in great profusion in the garden, even while we wore coats in the unheatable, cavernous house.

On Mamma's second at-home day, one of her callers suggested that her son would like to bring some of the young people of Austin some evening to meet me. Mamma's reply was: "On the evening of any at-home day we shall be very happy to receive the young people. But Ouida is only a child, and consequently, does not go out with young men." She did fail to add that at-home days were the only days when the parlors were warm.

Two weeks later the young man called on the telephone and asked to speak to "Miss Ferguson." The servant concluded that the grave gentleman calling must mean Mrs. Ferguson, and summoned Mamma to the telephone. Thinking that he was speaking to me, the gentleman asked to come to call, and to bring some of his friends with him.

"Young man, how old are you?" Mamma inquired of him.

I stood by, listening, and thinking that Mamma was getting sheer pleasure out of humiliating me! It was crushing embarrassment! However, the young man was invited to come, and to bring his friends. In the group that came was George Sampson Nalle.

Dorrace and I attended Whitis School. One morning, on the playground, after we had been at Whitis about a month, one of the little girls told Dorrace how much she liked her. She said she did not intend to pay any attention to another little girl who was circulating the story that nice girls shouldn't play with Dorrace because she was the daughter of a farmer and a potato digger. The well-known background of the little miss who had started the story made it even more ludicrous. The nickname, "Farmer Jim," of



which Daddy was so proud, made his younger daughter, much too young to see through human jealousies, acutely unhappy. I have often thought of that snub to my sister and dozens of other like incidents that later occurred. Perhaps only orphaned bachelors should run for high public office! Anyway, the families of public officials should have a sense of the ridiculous and the hide of a rhinoceros, if they hope to escape unhurt. I can truthfully say that incidents such as I have related didn't touch me.

That first winter at the Mansion, Mamma had a severe attack of influenza, which incapacitated her for weeks for any social affairs. The dear public is cruel and most exacting of its official servants. Soon, little rumblings of Austin gossip began to trickle back to us in the guise of sympathy. "Too bad Mrs. Ferguson is not physically strong enough to help the Governor in his new position," was the mildest scratch. Next came the tale that Austin whispers of every governor's wife under sixty who has the temerity to be ill. Few children have been born to governors' wives in their term of office. So, time soon hushed that tale.

Death came twice to the Ferguson family during that first year in the Governor's Mansion. Granny Wallace died, and, a few months later, Granny Ferguson. Although each was the antithesis of the other in nature, the two grandmothers had played a vital part in the lives of their children and grandchildren. We felt their loss very keenly, and again Mamma declined social invitations. After she had been reminded several times that persons in public life should carry on regardless of their personal feelings, she bowed to her critics. As Mamma so aptly expressed it: "Only the dead stay home nowadays."

In September 1916, just one year following Granny Ferguson's death, the Daughters of the Confederacy of Texas named the new hospital at the Confederate Woman's Home the "Fanny P. Ferguson Memorial Hospital." What greater honor could have been done to the memory of the widow of a captain in the Confederate Army? Our cup was not all bitters.

While we were busily engaged in our new domestic and social life, Daddy had more than routine official duties at

the Capitol. The legislature is always a problem to a governor who is anxious to consummate his own platform program. Daddy had made many campaign promises that he was eager to fulfill; many of them required legislative appropriations and new laws to bring them to fruition. To this end he worked day and night during the entire long session of the legislature.

The press accounts of Daddy's first message to the legislature reveal many of his constructive ideas. Among them what impresses me most today is his warning:

No law that can be passed will provide against wasteful extravagance, excessive expenditure or incorrect living. The Government can do much to protect property, but only the individual can produce property. The Government can do much to aid in the marketing of crops. The Government can do much to see that there is a fair division between those who labor and those who do not labor, but the Government can produce no actual value. You, as a Legislature, can regulate many things, but you cannot produce wealth by statute.

The public must sooner or later learn that the Government is not an apple tree whose fruit can be plucked at will and resupplied by nature. The Government is the people, and whatever burdens the Government must, in the last analysis, burden the people.

Every politician realizes the value of publicity and a good press. The effectiveness of an individual in political life depends, to a great extent, on his ability to arouse the interest and imagination of the public and keep them aroused. It is necessary to ring the bell at intervals, to startle the public, and, sometimes, even to shock it, though not too violently. This could apply to mayors of great cities, to governors and even to presidents.

Soon after his inauguration Daddy offered fifty dollars to the first Texas woman who had triplets after he took the oath of office. The stunt had the desired effect. It stirred up the people; it amused some and shocked others. Over the teacups buzzed both praise and condemnation for the new governor. What more could a politician ask? Mrs. Luke Collier, of Heidenheimer, received the prize for the first



triplets, with a flowery letter of praise for the service she was rendering her state.

Mrs. John G. McKay, wife of the secretary of state, and the mother of four children, told Daddy in no uncertain terms that she had supported him wholeheartedly for election, but that after his offer, she could no longer support him! Mrs. McKay might be termed Texas' Margaret Sanger. During my own later work with the Birth Control League of Texas, I thought often of Daddy's triplet race. I never succeeded in converting him to my own belief about regulated motherhood.

On March 2, 1915, Texas Independence Day, the Fergusons gave a reception honoring the Thirty-fourth Legislature. It was an elaborate and expensive affair, for some six hundred guests.

The Driskill Hotel did the catering. The manager, Mr. Stark, set up his kitchen under a tent on the lawn south of the Mansion. The menu served in the state dining room was the conventional chicken salad, coffee, sandwiches, olives, bonbons and little cakes. The punch, served in the family dining room, was not so popular, for it would not have affected even one possessed of an extreme allergy to alcohol! In short, there was not a conversation in the entire bowl. Mamma had always been a total abstainer in practice as well as in precept. In all her years in the Mansion she never served liquor in any form; it will be remembered that Daddy was against prohibition, and that he voted later for repeal of the Act. Mamma always had a mind of her own!

Dear little Mrs. Hillyer, the florist, did much of the decoration for that reception herself. On the tables and mantels, she used cut flowers, but she festooned the handsome old staircase in Southern smilax and long garlands of East Texas moss. I thought there was never anything else so lovely.

An awning covered the long walk from the street to the Mansion. From the great window on the stairway floated sweet music made by the orchestra of the Texas School for the Blind. Hugh Green, the Governor's office porter, in tails and white gloves, opened the front door and announced

the guests. At the door, Dorrace and I stood to hand out souvenirs of the occasion. The little memento that we gave to each guest was a photostatic copy of the signatures of the signers of the Declaration of Texas Independence at Washington-on-the-Brazos. These were rolled and tied with red, white, and blue ribbon. The reception was a dignified, lovely affair.

According to the clippings in Mamma's scrapbook, there were many dinners and receptions during Daddy's first term besides the semi-monthly at-home; but that first, grand reception is the one I have remembered most vividly through the years.

On Easter Monday Mamma gave the children of Austin an egg rolling, much like the one at the White House, hoping that it would become an annual affair. The first one was held on the sloping hillside in the southwest quarter of the Capitol grounds. The orchestra from the School for the Blind played, and ice cream was served to the children. Mamma's successors did not continue these parties.

There were many luncheons and box parties at the Hancock and Majestic theaters that first year. At the Mansion, Dorrace was given a Mother Goose party, the press accounts of which read like a fairy tale. The children were all dressed like the various characters out of Mother Goose. Mamma and Daddy posed with them on the front steps of the historic old mansion for a picture. These tots turned out to be some of Texas' most prominent matrons.

On Daddy's forty-fourth birthday, August 31, 1915, Mamma entertained for him with a six-course dinner followed by a smoker. It was strictly a man's party. In the center of the table was a miniature circus ring; the performers were dolls that caricatured the leading politicians of that day. President Wilson, in a stovepipe hat and carrying a white peace banner, rode the Democratic donkey in the sawdust. On the donkey was a placard: "The people like his gaits." The G.O.P. elephant, with his head tied up, was lying outside the ring; Teddy, with his "Big Stick," was trying to get in. On the left was Bryan, with a white feather in his cap; in the ring, busy at his desk, sat Secretary of State Lansing.



A large reception that first year honored the Daughters of the Confederacy when they met in state convention in Austin. I have recounted the many parties given at the Governor's Mansion during Governor Jim Ferguson's first term to show that the Fergusons really did their duty entertaining for the public.

As a relief from the large affairs, Mamma decided to invite her intimate friends to several small parties, and to make these parties old-fashioned quilting bees. A friendship quilt, on which each good friend embroidered her name, would make a splendid memento of her years in the Governor's Mansion. She learned later that in politics a friendship quilt can be a wet blanket!

Of necessity, the number of squares in the quilt was limited. Those who were not invited to make a square for the friendship quilt of the Governor's wife were offended. However, in the light of political events that followed, and of the manner in which some of the "friends" later conducted themselves toward the Fergusons, the quilt lost much of its meaning. Some names are still those of four-square friends — some might better have been written in wind on running water. The guest list of those quilting parties makes interesting reading; verily, politics makes strange bedcovers.

Mamma and Daddy observed rigidly the custom of a New Year's reception at the Mansion. From eight until eleven o'clock during the evening of every New Year's Day they were at home to the public. The press accounts of the decorations and elaborate menus for these affairs reveal that dieting, calories and ration points were non-existent at that time.

The salary of the governor of Texas during the Ferguson administrations was four thousand dollars a year. It didn't cover the cost of entertainment. The chief executive of Texas was supposed to be a man of private means. If he didn't spend plenty on entertaining he was "not upholding the honor of the great office." The governor's salary was raised to \$10,000 a year in 1936.

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## CHAPTER XI

### **Life In The Governor's Family**

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THE Governor and the Thirty-fourth Legislature were on the friendliest terms; on the whole, the members were in accord with the measures he advocated. They readily appropriated the money for the erection of a new school for the blind in Austin. To take the blind out of the old firetrap that housed them had been Daddy's heartfelt concern. No one had argued against it, but no one had done it.

The farm tenant bill limiting rent on farms to one-fourth the cotton and one-third of the grain crop was passed by the Senate by a vote of twenty-three to four, and in the House, one hundred and two to twenty-three. This law intended to aid the tenant farmer was later held unconstitutional by the courts.

The largest appropriation ever given the University of Texas to that date was appropriated in Daddy's first administration. Rural education also shared in the most liberal budget in the history of free schools in Texas.

Up until the first Ferguson administration, the State penitentiary system had shown a heavy financial loss each year. Of all the state problems this had proved the knottiest. The new governor set out to put the prisons on a self-sustaining basis. He talked of nothing else. When guests called at the Mansion in the evenings, he discussed the subject until any of his family could have written a book on the evils of the Texas prison system and what to do about it.

Mamma was not well that first winter in the Mansion.



Frequently, I would be taken from my books, hustled into a party dress and sent with Daddy to take her place at a dinner party. I distinctly remember one such party. The other guests were rather gay, society folk, not particularly interested in the problems of the State penitentiary system — at least not at a dinner party; but this did not daunt Daddy! Although he had always been an interesting talker on any subject in which he was vitally interested, he didn't hold his audience spellbound here. The men managed to keep up a small show of interest, but the ladies were plainly weary. Later, I could smile over it, but at the time I thought them heartless and heedless — so many Marie Antoinettes!

When Daddy went into office, the penitentiary system was so deep in debt that all lines of credit were closed to it. Daddy, who was then still a rich man, called a meeting of tool and implement dealers and personally guaranteed payment of bills for equipment to work prison farms. He further guaranteed bills for seed, and teams with which to work the land. It remained only to devise a way to get the convicts to work.

"Farmer Jim" Ferguson knew how money could be made in farming. It was preposterous to him that rich land, on which no taxes were assessed and where labor was free, could not be made to pay! In the early weeks of his administration he made numerous trips of inspection to the many state farms. I often heard him tell how he worked out the solution to the farm prison problem. He told the story this way:

"When I was inaugurated governor in 1915, I found the penitentiary system in a disturbed and chaotic condition. There seemed to have been an entire lack of discipline and every day brought new escapes and fights and brawls within the walls as a result of the failure to maintain orderly conduct. The penitentiary system had become hopelessly in debt.

"In traveling over the convict farms it appeared to me that a great deal of the trouble was a lack of interest on the part of the management in the individual convict. To verify my suspicion, I one day drove up to one of the big convict farms where about 500 men were employed. It was noon and

the convicts were being turned into the dining room for the noonday meal. I went to the manager of the farm and requested that I be allowed to go unobserved into the dining room with the convicts and I also requested that no guard go with me and that I be allowed to confer with the convicts in my own private way.

"The manager of the farm said that while he had no right to deny me the privilege, at the same time there were so many bad men in the group who were serving long sentences for murder, robbery, burglary and other hideous crimes that he doubted whether it would be safe for me to go alone among them. I was not so brave, but I felt that no harm could come to me or any other governor who had the power of complete pardon. I was perfectly willing and eager to take the chance because I felt that I would get some valuable information.

"In the rush of the convicts to get to the dinner table, I was not recognized or even observed. I walked up to the end of one of the tables and reached over and got a big flour biscuit. I said to the convict nearest to me, 'Do you get this kind of bread all the time?' Without taking time to look up the convict replied, 'No, sometimes it is bad and sometimes the biscuits are so hard that you could knock a steer down with one of them.' I walked on about halfway down the table and broke open my biscuit and picked up the molasses pitcher and poured some molasses out on my biscuit and began eating my biscuit and molasses. I said to another convict, 'Do you get this kind of molasses all the time?' He said, 'Hell no, sometimes we get plain old black strap which, though sweet, is often poison, and we have to be careful how much we eat of it.' I moved on down to the other end of the table and reached over and got a big piece of bacon and put it in my biscuit and continued to eat biscuit, molasses and bacon. No prisoner had yet recognized me. They were so busy with their meal that they had no time for anybody else. I said to another convict, 'You get this kind of meat all the time?' And he said, 'Not by a damn' sight. Sometimes it is so fat it would choke a dog to eat it. Sometimes it is so tough that a dog couldn't eat it.' And then he turned to me and said, 'Partner, what the hell is all



this to you?' and I said, 'Well, I am just a little bit interested in the welfare of you boys confined in this penitentiary.'

"Many faces were turned to me and one prisoner recognized me and then yelled at the top of his voice, 'Boys, Jim Ferguson, the Governor, is taking dinner with us.' With this announcement, I at once became the center of attraction and the cynosure of the eyes of all the prisoners. They all stopped eating and viewed me with astonishment and surprise. I said, 'Boys, finish your meal as quick as you can for I am here to hold a little old-fashioned experience meeting with you boys and to talk about your condition.' Believe me, it didn't take them long to finish. I then mounted a bench that gave me full view of the whole 500 men. As serious as it was, it was an inspiring sight to look into the faces of 500 convicts. There were all kinds of faces. Some looked like bad men and were bad men. Some were good-looking. Some were ugly. Some carried no evidence of criminality in countenance or expression. Some were young; some were old.

"I then said to the boys, 'I have come among you to learn from your lips something about the management of the penitentiary system now in the throes of failure and disorder. Look around you and you will notice there is no guard in this room. There is nobody but you and me. I have purposely arranged this meeting so that you and I can have a little private talk about your condition and the condition of the penitentiary system.' I said, 'Let me say in the beginning that this is a conference between you and the Governor of the State and in order to get the real facts first-handed from you, I want to say that the private confidence of every prisoner will be respected by me and kept wholly confidential and any prisoner who tells any guard or any penitentiary official what took place between you and me during this meeting will be regarded with disfavor and I do not think I will ever consider his application for pardon. So I hope you will feel that you are protected and tell me the whole truth.' I said, 'I cannot call on all of you at one time, but will call on a few. Now,' I said, 'will that boy over there with the gold teeth and the curly hair and the tattoo on his right arm please rise and tell me what in his opinion is the matter with the penitentiary system.'

"The convict arose and spoke his mind freely and told me many things that I am sure have never been told to any other governor or prison official and what he said was as much a surprise to most of the prisoners as it was to me. I asked him to be seated. I said, 'Now I am going to call on the old man down at the end of the table who already seems to be surprised and frightened at my coming here. Let me say to him that he can be at ease and speak his mind freely and we will all be glad to hear what he has to say.'

"With faltering voice this frightened old man gave his experience in the penitentiary during the 12 years that he had already served. He furnished information valuable indeed and I felt as I listened to him that I had struck the keynote as to how to right the wrongs and troubles of the penitentiary system. I listened to a few more convicts and told them that I would have to close the meeting on account of lack of time. All of them wanted to talk, but, of course, I had neither time nor opportunity to listen to but a few of them.

"I said, 'Now, boys, I have heard you and I want you to hear me. It occurs to me from what I have heard you say in the presence of your fellow prisoners that one of the troubles of the penitentiary system is that hope has been destroyed in the hearts and minds of most of you. You seem to be downcast because of a belief, whether rightfully or wrongfully founded, that there is no incentive for you to be a good prisoner. If that be true, we have here today made a wonderful discovery. Let me say to you that I am one governor that will be looking for a good reason to pardon every one of you out of the penitentiary. The situation that faces you and me is not so much that you are in here under sentence; the burning question is how to get you out of here and let you return to your home and loved ones and society. I have already made up my mind to not wait for further red tape procedure, but to here and now make you a proposition.'

" 'If you will become a good prisoner and go to work chopping more wood, picking more cotton, hoeing more corn than you have ever done before, I am going to give you credit for it. I am going to convince you that without the



aid of political help or influence you can take that old ax, that old hoe and chop your way to freedom. If you will become this kind of a prisoner, then I want to say to you that all prisoners having a sentence of seven years or less will be pardoned when they have served half their time. With this kind of a record you will be given credit for the time already served.' I further said, 'I want the long-term men, convicted for the more serious offenses, to feel that they are not forgotten. If you will obey the rules of the penitentiary system and help to keep order and help prevent the escape of other convicts, I promise that while I am in the governor's office I will personally read the record in your case. If there is merit in your plea for pardon, if you have been given too long a sentence or if you have served long enough, and you have really reformed, or for any other humane reason or cause you may be entitled to consideration, I want you to know that here is one governor who wants to help you.'

"Just at this time a long, lean, lanky hungry-looking prisoner about 45 years of age rose and said, 'Governor, may I ask a question? Governor, most of the boys in this penitentiary are guilty of the crime for which they have been convicted. The feeling has been that when the prison doors closed upon them they became lost and friendless and they seem to give up all hopes of pardon and as a result, many of them take chances of escape and become ungovernable. If they had been treated with friendliness they would have made better prisoners. Take my case for instance; I am here under seven years' sentence for cow theft. I am guilty and I make no denial. There was no excuse for my offense and I got just what I deserved. But Governor, my crime has fallen on innocent shoulders. If I was alone in the world, it would make little difference what became of me, but at home I have a wife and three little girls, ages five, seven and nine. I got a letter from my wife last night and she said that all the children had been sick for a week and the baby was asking when papa was coming home. The thought of my children being without my help and support and my dear wife who is sick having to make a living for my children just drives me crazy and I sometimes feel like taking my own life. And

dear Governor, do I understand you to say that if I will make the kind of prisoner that you talk about that you will cut my sentence of seven years half in two and let me go home to my family?’

“I said, ‘Yes, and I will give you the credit for overtime in addition and you will get home in a little less than two years’ time without waiting for the usual expiration of your seven years’ sentence.’ Rising with upraised hand as if appealing to God on high this poor unfortunate said, ‘Governor, you have made a contract with one prisoner and just watch me from this on. I will do three times as much work as I have ever done before while confined.’

“My contract with the prisoners that day spread like wildfire to the half-dozen or more prison camps of Texas and a new shout and a new song was heard in the Brazos Bottom and the men went to work and quit trying to escape. We had only six escapes in one year out of three or four thousand convicts. The prisoners went to chopping three times as much wood, and twice as much cotton. The average cotton picked per man doubled and my penitentiary commission was enabled to make \$3,000,000 out of the penitentiary system because of a humane policy of friendliness to friendless prisoners. I am glad to say as a result of my trip to the dining room with the boys and my breaking bread with them my administration achieved the best record for efficiency in penitentiary management ever attained by any governor in the past.”

While the Governor was traveling over the state working on the problem of state institutions, Mamma asked the legislature for a small appropriation with which to build a greenhouse on the grounds of the Mansion. The legislature graciously granted her request, and the building and pagoda connecting it with the house were built at the southwest corner of the Mansion. At the entrance of the greenhouse her name and the date were set in the concrete floor. This was to cost her a heart pang ten years later.

Daddy’s problems were varied, and not all were grave ones. Although he had been a lifelong anti-prohibitionist, he was never a drinking man, and he had utter contempt for drunkenness. In spite of this, he had more than his share of



friends who drank to excess. One day he came home to lunch thoroughly disgusted, and at the same time, a bit amused. Soon after his arrival at the executive office that morning, a knock had come at his private entrance. When he opened his door, there stood one of his friends, a man of considerable prominence in the state, in a sloppy state of drunkenness. It had not, however, affected his uncommon command of the English language; he proceeded to deliver a curtain lecture on Jim's lack of appreciation of his friendship.

"No sooner had I disposed of this drunk," Daddy told us, "than a call came from the police department. Another friend of mine seemed to have been shooting glasses off the top shelf of a downtown bar! Did I want to send for him, or should they arrest him?"

Because of the second man's prominence, and their old friendship, Daddy put on his hat and went after the drunk. Placing him in good hands, he returned to the Capitol, only to be met by another call. Still another, a third friend, was reported as sitting on the curb in the alley back of the Driskill Hotel, playing a French harp. Down went the Governor to stop the concert!

The following day Daddy called the three culprits together; he lectured them at length on the evils of drink while they squirmed in their chairs; they expected him to end by asking their resignations from prominent posts they all held in the party organization. Finally, the Governor came to the end of his talk; he paused, and then said, dramatically:

"Now, my friends, if you must drink, promise me that you won't all get drunk the same day."

Beginning in May 1915, there was grave trouble along the Texas-Mexican border. Raids by bandits from both the Texas and Mexican sides of the river on isolated ranches and settlements had given State Rangers and local peace officers more than they could handle. Many Americans and some peaceable Mexican-Texans were ambushed and murdered. Beginning at Los Indios, in Cameron County, Texas, in May, the raids grew so frequent that a full list of them would take up a chapter in this book. The military commander at Matamoros did not cooperate with State, Federal

or United States Army officers. Indeed, it was rumored that he was supplying the bandits with arms, and certainly was giving sanctuary on the Mexican side of the tortuous river, which is easily forded in dry weather at hundreds of points in its lower hundred miles.

Beginning with the murder of a young American in Cameron County on July 17, 1915, there were robberies of stores in small towns; railroad trestles were burned; a suspected Mexican was lynched at San Benito, Texas; a Mexican rancher was killed; a United States cavalry trooper was killed, and two deputy sheriffs were wounded — all within a fortnight. Early in August the State Rangers killed three alleged bandits, and, three days later, at Sebastian, a town in Cameron County, a band of fourteen Mexicans kidnapped and executed two Texans named Austen, a father and his son. Next night a watchman at a cotton gin was wounded and a youth in a car was ambushed near Brownsville. The next day, there was a pitched battle between sixty outlaws and United States cavalrymen, Rangers and the Sheriff's men. So bitter had this local war become that Adjutant General Henry Hutchings of Texas took the field himself. There were eight other bandit raids in August, some of them taking lives.

On September 1, thirty Mexicans raided a pumping station on one of the Lower Rio Grande Valley canals near Brownsville, Texas. They set it on fire and executed two American farmers, sparing the life of another because he had been kind to one of the bandits who had been wounded in a *Villista* attack on Matamoros in March of the same year. By that time there was firing across the Rio Grande, and pitched battles between bandits in Mexico and United States troops on the Texas side. James B. McAllen, a prominent ranchman, was attacked in his stone ranch house at San Juanito at dawn on September 24, and, single-handed, killed four and wounded one of twelve raiders in an hour's battle. That same morning U. S. troopers fought seventy-five Mexicans at Progreso, Texas, and, in a two-hour battle, a cavalry captain was wounded, two troopers were killed, and one was captured and taken across the river, where Mexicans cut off his head and displayed it on a pole.



On October 18, 1915, bandits derailed the Brownsville train six miles north of that Rio Grande town of twelve thousand inhabitants. The State Health Officer at Brownsville and the engineer of the train were killed; several soldiers on the train as passengers were killed or shot. State Rangers shot four bandit suspects for this crime. The next Sunday a camp nearby was raided and an infantryman killed. On October 21, at Ojo de Agua Ranch, seventy-four miles up the river from Brownsville, three soldiers were killed and eight wounded in a surprise attack by bandits on their outpost camp. There was one more battle in February, but there were no further outbreaks on the Lower Rio Grande until June. Up near El Paso, on May 8, 1916, Mexicans raided Glen Springs, killed three United States soldiers and captured two American civilians. The cavalry pursued the raiders into Mexico, and captured a lieutenant colonel of the revolutionists.

These were only the highlights of a guerrilla war that terrorized the Texas border from May until the end of the first year that my father was governor of Texas. Since the start of the revolution in 1910, units of the National Guard of Texas had twice been called to service on the Rio Grande. From February to July 1913, four companies, and, from April through November 1914, during the American occupation of Vera Cruz, most of the State troops stayed on the Rio Grande. Soon after they arrived the sleepy calm of summer descended upon the mesquite thickets across the river, and the guardsmen had sweated and fumed at their inaction. Daddy was anxious to avoid another such occupation, costly to the state and to the guardsmen. After it was proved that the raiders were invaders from Mexico, it became the concern of the United States Army, which did yeoman service with small forces in spite of hampering orders from Washington.

The Texas Rangers, numbering only two dozen normally, were increased and then served as the equivalent of State G-men in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The average *bandido* felt more fear of one Ranger than of a platoon of infantry abiding by the rules of war and the "Watchful Waiting" policy of Washington.

This period history belongs in the story of the Fergusons.

Jim Ferguson was the only governor in the United States who had faced an armed insurrection since Shay's Rebellion in New England after the Revolution. The roots of this border trouble were not uncovered until after we went to war with Germany in 1917. But there was actually a crackpot plan agreed upon among Mexicans on both sides of the Rio Grande to "Take Texas back from the Yankees." A revolutionary manifesto was issued at San Diego, near Falfurrias, Texas. A copy of it was captured later by our authorities.

Thousands of Mexicans and Texas citizens of Mexican blood or birth fled to Mexico after the Texas Rangers moved into the Lower Valley and began "fighting fire with fire." They dealt out summary justice in the brush country. Many of these refugees joined the raiding force that grew to be an "army" of some four hundred men. They maneuvered openly along the Rio Grande.

The governor of Texas offered a reward of \$1,000 for the leaders. They retaliated by offering \$1,000 for Jim Ferguson, dead or alive.

The tension was finally relaxed in October 1915.

Meanwhile, in September 1915, the United States had recognized General Venustiano Carranza as First Chief of Mexico. This enraged General Francisco (Pancho) Villa, who immediately took seventeen Americans off a train at Santa Ysabel, Chihuahua, and executed them.

On March 9, 1916, Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico, and killed eight United States soldiers and ten civilians in a night attack. Washington sent General Pershing with the First Punitive Expedition into Mexico to catch Villa. It will be recalled that Pershing stayed out the year, and fought "*Carranzistas*," as well as "*Villistas*" until he was ordered back.

On Sunday, June 18, the Wilson administration issued a statement on disturbed conditions along the Mexican border and called out virtually the entire National Guard of the United States — 150,000 men. They were to be sent to the border when, and where, required by Major General Frederick Funston, then commanding the area. At least



100,000 troops were in Texas, training and waiting.

Governor Ferguson had already called out the National Guard of Texas, and on May 9 had sent the Infantry brigade to the Rio Grande. The brigade moved to Corpus Christi in September, some of them remaining on duty until war was declared on Germany in April 1917, when the Thirty-sixth (Texas) Division was formed at Camp Bowie, Fort Worth, Texas.

Meanwhile, the Governor was in a "damned-if-he-did-and-damned-if-he-didn't" spot. Border citizens were sending delegations, telegrams and telephone appeals for troops each time a raid occurred; Washington was advising against the use of State troops. Naturally, the Governor was held responsible for any and all injustices, which is always the case. Governor Ferguson was urged to "Swear in a thousand Rangers and clean up the border once and for all; the United States troops don't know how to deal with these Mexicans!" He was being urged at the same time to "Stop the murder of innocent Mexicans for political grudges and the terrorizing of others to seize their property."

Trouble spots on the border always received quick attention from Daddy, usually in the form of a telephone call to the sheriff of the county where the trouble was brewing. He would make an ardent appeal to the sheriff to use his office to straighten out things, offering the service of the Rangers if it was absolutely necessary. Daddy really did his best to restore order.

Shortly after General Carranza was recognized by Washington as head of the *de facto* government of Mexico, he sent Governor Ferguson a flowery invitation to meet him on the international bridge at Laredo to discuss amicably the many frontier troubles. Daddy called in General Funston, Adjutant General Hutchings of Texas, and several of the Ranger captains to confer on the advisability of accepting the invitation. It was decided that some good might come of such a conference, and no harm was foreseen.

So, with troops parading at each end of the bridge, with flags waving and bands playing, General Carranza and Governor Ferguson met in the middle of the international bridge over the Rio Grande. Each official knew only enough

of the other's language to express simple greetings. These over, the conference was carried on through interpreters. Carranza promised to place a sufficient number of his Federal troops along the border to keep the peace, and also to take other necessary steps in the interest of making Mexico a friendly neighbor. Nothing much ever came of this gesture. The real battle was waged with the State Department at Washington, and brought us three times to the brink of war with Mexico before February 1917, when our troops were withdrawn.

Before parting on the international bridge General Carranza had asked Daddy the customary, polite Spanish question: "Have I anything in Mexico that you would like to have?"

Daddy's reply was: "General Carranza, out in El Paso, Texas, we have old General Terrazas, of Mexico. He is past eighty years old, and almost totally blind. He can do no one any harm. He was once a very rich man in your country, but you have taken his land, and all his cattle, and now you hold his son in prison in Mexico. This old man would like to have his son with him in his last years. If you will free this man so that he can come and live with his father, I will greatly appreciate it; I further promise you that he will cause no more trouble in Mexico."

General Carranza replied that the request was easy to grant, because the younger Terrazas was in a Federal prison, and that as soon as he returned to Mexico City the prisoner would be released and returned to his old father in Texas. Weeks and months went by with no word from either the prisoner or President Carranza. Finally, Captain Ransom of the Rangers came in one day from the border. He had been riding along the Rio Grande the week before when General Villa and a group of his men rode up in a cloud of dust on the Mexico side of the river. There was held a parley across the stream. Captain Ransom reported that Villa had said: "How is your Chief?" and then, "Is there anything he would like to have?"

Daddy sent the same request to General Villa that he had made of President Carranza. This request went by devious channels. Three days from the time Villa received



it, young Terrazas was delivered to his father in El Paso. As a further gracious token of friendship, General Villa sent Daddy an autographed photograph of himself. "Pancho" Villa was an odd mixture of cruelty, ruthlessness, naive pride and generosity: truly, a Robin Hood of the border.

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## CHAPTER XII

# The Storm Gathers

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IN June of 1916 both Mamma and Daddy went to St. Louis for the Democratic National Convention. The National platform contained a plank favoring suffrage for women. Daddy was a bit old-fashioned, and felt that "Woman's place is in the home."

At the National Convention he made the Minority Report on the suffrage plank in the platform. When Daddy started to speak, women in the gallery, led by Carrie Chapman Catt, began hissing. Daddy told us later that his first impulse was to retort: "The hissing of geese once saved Rome!" However, he remembered that this was not proper in a Southerner, and simply remarked: "Hissing is their only argument; pay no attention to it." The suffrage plank was adopted by a large majority, and it was to prove a blessing to Jim Ferguson eight years later! Without the votes of the women he could never have defeated his enemies.

The 1916 race for governor was a mild summer zephyr compared with the 1914 campaign. It lacked the zest and flavor of the first one.

Charles H. Morris, of Winnsboro, was the only opposing candidate. The chief issues of the campaign were the official acts of Jim Ferguson during his first term as governor of Texas. Morris also opposed the Gibson bill, while Governor Ferguson endorsed it.

The Gibson bill was designed to replace the old Robertson insurance law that had been passed in 1917, the intent



of which was to "Keep Texas Money in Texas." It required out-of-state insurance companies to invest 75 per cent of their Texas reserves in Texas securities of specified classes, and to deposit the securities so obtained in either the State treasury, or some bank that was a State or National depository. On its face this seemed a good law as far as Texas was concerned. *Keep Money in Texas* sounded well. Anyone asked for a "horseback" opinion about the Robertson law would have replied, "I'm in favor of it, of course." As a result of the operation of the Robertson law many big insurance companies pulled out of Texas.

The Gibson bill made no such rigid requirements of companies doing business in Texas. Its avowed purpose was to encourage the investment of their money in mortgages, bonds, and other securities, as well as to reduce the rate of interest on such loans. Ferguson contended this would bring cheap money to Texas, and thereby develop the state.

Morris charged Daddy with being a spendthrift because he had sponsored a bill through the legislature that appropriated a million dollars for rural education, while the University of Texas received the largest sum ever appropriated for it up to that time. The irony of the last-named charge was to appear within a year. Considering the custom of the times, Jim Ferguson did advocate the spending of considerable money to advance the welfare of the state, but, in comparison with governors who came on the Texas scene after him, as a spender he was a plain "piker."

Morris also criticized the Governor of Texas for stopping at the McAlpin Hotel when he went to New York on State business! The McAlpin was new, then, and very dazzling. From every stump in Texas Morris censured Mamma for having a secretary. He told the people: "When I am your governor, my wife will have no social secretary! Instead, when you people come to call on her at the Governor's Mansion, you'll find her in the back yard making a pot of good lye soap."

A campaign story went all over Texas that the spendthrift Fergusons never wore the same garment twice — that we had a clothes chute that emptied on Tenth Street, south of the Mansion, and that when we took off our clothes we

dumped them out through this chute! Many sincere folk wrote us asking that we send them some of these clothes, instead of putting them all down the chute!

Morris advocated civil service for the Banking and Insurance departments. He also attempted to drag in the old bone of contention, prohibition. Because of Daddy's promise to veto all liquor legislation, either pro or anti, this issue had been dead for two years. Morris wanted to revive it, and declared he would like to see the state dry.

Morris was speaking to crowds numbering fifty to seventy-five, which fact assured Daddy that his own reelection was certain. At the same time, he realized the danger of over-confidence, and decided to make a few speeches in defense of his stewardship of the state. T. H. McGregor, C. C. McDonald and B. Y. Cummings, three of his staunchest friends, all hit the political hustings in defense of Governor Ferguson's official acts.

In defense of the large appropriations for education and the inevitable increase in taxes, they pointed to all the new "little red schoolhouses" throughout the rural districts of Texas. In addition to these, the new school for the blind was under construction, replacing the old firetrap. They also pointed with pride to the vast strides made by the University of Texas and the State Teachers' Colleges as a result of the large appropriations approved for them by Governor Ferguson.

In regard to his stay at the McAlpin Hotel in New York, Jim Ferguson replied:

"I could, of course, have stopped at the wagon yard, but I considered it my duty as the representative of a proud people and the largest state in the Union to live in a fashion becoming my position and the people I represented."

Daddy explained that he had made this trip because he could not come to terms with the War Department relative to a \$90,000 claim against Texas over a shortage in the Quartermaster's Department during the Colquitt administration. Going to Washington, he got the claim reduced to \$32,000, and learned that a pawnbroker in New York had bought some of the goods. Daddy found the pawnbroker, and, in consequence, the state had received about \$4,000



for the stolen goods. Likewise, in St. Louis, he found another pawnbroker from whom the state received about \$3,000.

The criticism about the social secretary was not answered. Mamma needed help, and Daddy offered no excuse for giving her help. It is interesting to note that what was considered a campaign issue in 1916 is an accepted necessity since that time. The salary of a social secretary is paid by the state. Mamma paid for her secretary out of her own pocket and Daddy's.

The Texas prison system has presented a knotty problem to every governor before and since the Ferguson administrations. Jim Ferguson won his "spurs" on management of the prison. His reshaping of the penitentiary system was one of the really great accomplishments of his first term. In his second campaign he told the people that when he went into office he found the penitentiary system \$900,000 in debt; all lines of credit were closed to the institution, and proper discipline was unknown. By visiting with the convicts, unaccompanied by any guard, he had accomplished much. His interest in the "forgotten man" in prison had done a great deal toward putting the penitentiary on a paying basis. The hope he held out to the prisoners had inspired most of them to work harder. The Governor stated, however, that with a few unruly convicts stronger methods had to be used. He recited an example:

"The Thirty-third Legislature had passed a law that convicts could not be whipped. This law had been made necessary by abuses that had been heaped on convicts by guards. The wording of the law was not known to the convicts, and they were all under the impression that they could refuse to work and not be whipped for refusing. I read the law carefully and found that, in the presence of a doctor and two witnesses, a convict refusing to work could be punished with the lash.

"The first bunch of bullies that refused to work were given the whip. The second day they again refused, and again, in the presence of a doctor and two witnesses, they were whipped. The third day they all went to work and there was no more trouble."

The Governor said, time and again: "It's so easy. If the

d — n fools could only realize that either fear of the lash or hope of pardon is the only way to make a convict work.”

That the penitentiary system was then self-sustaining was a great feather in Daddy’s political cap.

In connection with his solving of the penitentiary problem the Governor had, during the previous summer, made an experiment. Because of the Mexican trouble on the border and the war in Europe, he thought it might be wise to clear the young mesquite thicket that had grown up on the grounds at Camp Mabry, near Austin, and make ready for what might come. That was in a day before W.P.A. and government grants. Daddy decided to bring on thirty short-term men with good records from the penitentiary, and turn the job over to them.

The day these convicts arrived in Austin Mamma, Dorrace and I went with Daddy to Camp Mabry to see them and hear his proposal to the men. It was simple:

“I brought you boys to Austin to clear this land. If you look all around you won’t see a guard anywhere, because, a few minutes ago, I started the guards back to Huntsville. You are here to clear this land and guard each other until the job is completed. Nobody is going to watch you or count you every night. When the work is finished, if there is one man missing, the remaining men are all going back to the pen. You are here on your honor, and my family and I are coming out to see you from time to time. We are coming out to eat supper with you and talk over your troubles with you.

“When Camp Mabry is clean of every mesquite, I am going to issue thirty full pardons and give one to each of you, provided there have been no escapes. Do you accept my proposition on those terms?”

A shout went up! “Yes, indeed we do! Yes, Governor, and *praise God!*”

Those men worked like dogs — early and late — until the parade ground was clean as a pin. Almost every afternoon, as soon as the governor’s office closed, we went out to visit the men. That was the most joyous crowd I ever saw on the afternoon Daddy handed out the thirty pardons.



Some of the men laughed, some sang, and some wept for joy.

The heat of the 1916 campaign increased daily. We have a saying in Texas: "The hotter the dog days, the louder the sizzle bugs, the better the election year."

The women were agitating for the right to vote. Morris declared himself in favor of woman suffrage.

Daddy expressed himself in this way: "Suffrage is not my conception of woman's sphere in life; however, I am not going to deliberately walk into the jaws of death. If she wants suffrage, I am certainly willing for her to have it."

Daddy declared himself in favor of increasing the appropriation for aid to rural schools to \$2,000,000. He stated that while he was in favor of liberal appropriations to the State University and State colleges, he thought it wise to give at least three dollars to rural schools and high schools in small towns for each dollar designated for higher education.

He further declared himself in favor of free textbooks for the schools, the creation of a highway commission, the establishment of additional courts to relieve the overworked judiciary, special legislation for farmers and laborers, a law to prohibit the carrying of firearms, the absentee ballot, and a semi-monthly pay day for all corporation employees.

In a speech at Sweetwater, Texas, Daddy told the cattlemen that he proposed to submit to the next legislature a bill to provide \$100,000 for the eradication of the cattle tick.

One of the charges made against Daddy in this campaign was most contemptible. A former official of the Temple State Bank told of several large deposits that he claimed had been made in Daddy's favor. He said that one check, for \$10,000, was drawn on the Houston Ice and Brewing Company. This man later retracted his statement, but by that time it had served its purpose in helping the opposition.

In the midst of that summer's campaign the Texas Farmer's Institute met in Austin. The Governor was to address the organization, whose meetings were being held in a building on the campus of the University of Texas. With

only a few minutes to spare, Daddy rushed out of his office to the curb and hailed a taxicab. Slumped on the back seat was a very drunk man. Time was precious, and, not wanting to be late for his appointment, he got into the cab with the drunk. After they had ridden a block or so, the drunk man aroused himself and asked: "What's your name, stranger?"

"Ferguson," Daddy said.

"You aren't kin to Jim Ferguson, are you?"

Not wishing to enter into a controversy with the drunk man, the Governor said: "No."

"Well," the fellow said, "I'm certainly glad of that! He's the damnedest windbag in the world next to Joe Bailey, and if he lives much longer at the rate he's going he'll soon pass Bailey!"

Years later, after Senator Bailey and Daddy had "buried the hatchet" and were close friends, Daddy would tell that tale on him. Bailey always accused him of making up the story, but Daddy swore it happened just that way.

One morning while the same Farmer's Institute was in progress, a call came to Mamma requesting that some of the Four-H boys and girls be allowed to go through the Mansion that morning. It was short notice, but Mamma replied that she would be very happy to have them come.

It was cleaning day; the upstairs maid had already started her work and was not presentable to watch the Sam Houston Room while the young people filed through it. Lucie Wooten, a friend of mine, had spent the night with me. She begged to be allowed to don the maid's best uniform and take her place.

When the boys and girls asked Lucie questions she would pretend she was French, and spoke no English. Well, if the girl didn't understand English, they reasoned, they could speak frankly to each other in her presence. Their remarks were not entirely complimentary to us. The girls looked under everything for dust. When they couldn't open Mamma's cedar chest, which happened to be locked, they were caustic. Governors evidently were expected to be open and aboveboard, with no locks!

The last to arrive were four big, gawky country boys. We showed them the downstairs, and then sent them up for a



look at the Sam Houston Room. By this time, Lucie was disgusted with some of the small things the young snippets had done and said. As the boys stood gazing and gaping up at the tester over the Sam Houston bed, she caught the eye of one of the boys and, raising a French eyebrow, winked at him slyly and then cast her eyes down!

"Great Gawd-a-mighty!" the boy exclaimed. "Maybe she can't speak English, but she's shore a-talkin to me! Let's go, boys, this is no place for us!"

Down the great stairs they came, and they didn't stop to thank us for our courtesy. We understood when Lucie told us what she had done, and we were convulsed with laughter.

The cares and worries of Daddy's office monopolized most of his time. His daughters were growing up. There were no more pillow fights with Daddy before we went to bed; he no longer played jokes on us; his mind was on more serious things.

Occasionally, he would take us all campaigning with him. One reason he didn't take Dorrace and me more often was that he never knew when we were going to pop out with the wrong thing. I, especially, was an offender along this line, and chief among my offenses was my practice of taking part in local races. I could see no reason against speaking out in support of some friend who was a candidate for a county office. If the man had merely been nice to me when we visited in his town, I was for him. I believed that one good turn . . . ! So Daddy taught me my first great lesson in political expediency.

When I would argue that Mr. So-and-so had asked me to help him, and that because of his hospitality to me I felt obliged to help him, especially in view of the fact that his opponents were fighting the Fergusons, Daddy would scold:

"But Sis, why can't you understand! We want the supporters of all these other candidates to vote for us. Run your own race and stay out of other races."

Dorrace had always been a shrinking, sensitive, timid child. Publicity of any type actually stampeded her. From the beginning of the World War the price of shoes had gone higher and higher. One day Mamma bought Dorrace a new pair of shoes, and, as had always been our custom when we

had anything new, Dorrace put on the shoes that evening and paraded before Daddy. He, admiring, asked what the shoes cost.

"Eighteen dollars," Dorrace told him, proudly.

Our father was a bit horrified, though he didn't say much. A few days later, while making a speech to a group of cattlemen, he pointed out that while cattle brought too little, the consumer paid too much; for example, his twelve-year-old daughter with her eighteen-dollar shoes:

"When I thought about what one of my big Hereford hides would bring on the market, and then looked down at those shoes, I exclaimed, 'Good-bye, Mr. Bullhide!'"

Dorrace couldn't see the joke and said: "It's bad enough to be in a political family, but to have the price of one's shoes dragged out for public gaze . . . Oh!"

On July 22 the Democratic primaries were held; Daddy received the comforting majority of 58,934 votes. Democratic nomination was and is the equivalent to election in Texas.

The Democratic State Convention was held in Houston the first week in August. The fourth plank of the party platform paid tribute to Jim Ferguson. The Governor had stood the test, and the people's commendation was proof of his statesmanship.

In the minority report from the platform committee, which was, of course, the voice of the Ferguson opposition, two additional planks were offered. The first one called for the submission of a constitutional amendment providing for state-wide prohibition of liquor, and the second plank urged the passing of a law to limit the amount of money spent on campaigns. Both planks were overwhelmingly voted down; but we knew that the prohibition issue, which had been dormant since the beginning of the Ferguson administration, was raising its head for a fight in the not too distant future.

Immediately following Daddy's second inauguration in January 1917, he told the House and Senate, meeting in joint session:

"I need you, and you need me; the people of Texas need



both of us to accomplish those things which represent their will."

On the whole, the Thirty-fifth Legislature was extremely peaceful, and accomplished much. Daddy asked for \$2,000,000 for rural schools, and the bill was passed. In addition, four new State normal schools were created. The "Ferguson-for-Education" drive was on.

The legislature appropriated money for the creation of a State Highway Commission; the act provided for a three-member board, all to be appointed by the governor to serve two years. As a consequence, Texas has a magnificent network of state highways, started in the second administration of James E. Ferguson as governor of Texas.

An asylum for the insane of the Negro race was also established at Rusk by this same legislature.

At the close of the regular session, a special session was called by the Governor in April to consider the formation of a free textbook commission. Not only did this special session give free textbooks to the children of Texas, but it also provided several new buildings for state institutions at a cost of several million dollars.

America had entered the World War on April 6, 1917. The legislature made liberal appropriations for the National Guard and the Texas Rangers. However, strange to say, in view of the war hysteria sweeping the country, the military appropriations were the only items that the legislature cut to less than the Governor's recommendations.

William Jennings Bryan visited Texas during the closing days of the regular session of the Thirty-fifth Legislature. His pacifist speech to that body had its effect on appropriations for war preparations. Bryan had resigned as Secretary of State in June 1915, after disagreeing with President Wilson over the sharp protest sent the German government when the *Lusitania* was torpedoed.

"Grape Juice Bryan," as the ageing Great Commoner was now called by the irreverent public, had a two-fold purpose in coming to Texas. He was eager to stir up the dormant prohibition question, as well as to promote pacifism. I can close my eyes now and see Daddy and Bryan walking out of the Capitol together, Bryan's arm around Daddy's shoulder

as he earnestly urged the Governor to call a special session of the legislature to consider prohibition. Daddy's family laughed in silence at his politeness to the distinguished visitor; we knew Daddy's company manners were killing to him, and that he was dying to turn his anti-prohibition guns on Bryan. The Governor listened in silence, and, in the end, his only answer was, in effect, "There is nothing doing."

In the beginning Governor Ferguson opposed conscription, on the ground that it was better that the President lead than drive; but after an exchange of several letters and telegrams with President Wilson, Daddy changed his mind on the question. He wired the President to that effect and put himself to the task of setting up machinery necessary to carrying out the Selective Service Act in Texas.

When disorder threatened or broke out in any part of the state, citizens would wire or telephone the Governor asking that Rangers be sent to quell the trouble. Daddy would muse:

"Well, I don't know whether or not that situation calls for ten-gallon hats and pistols! Certainly I am not going to send Rangers until I've talked with local peace officers and given them a chance to settle the trouble."

In almost every instance the local authorities worked out the problem without help from the Rangers. Many times during our prohibition debacle, later governors did not follow this policy, and, in Texas, we know that trouble followed. Unless the local peace officers need and ask help of Rangers to keep the peace, the people naturally resent these "pistol-totin' " special State officers.

Life at the Mansion in the evenings during the hot Texas summer was never too gay. Unless there were callers the family retired early.

George Sampson Nalle, of Austin, had become my constant visitor. Daddy laid down the law! George must leave the Mansion at ten o'clock. We would quietly slip in from a picture show and sit in the swing on the downstairs gallery. I had a private understanding with the night watchman that after we came in he was to watch the back of the house, and I would watch the front.



Daddy slept on the screened upstairs gallery directly overhead of where we sat in the swing. Things would have been lovely if I had not had a little sister! Dorrace never let Daddy forget his ten o'clock rule. She would set an alarm clock to ring at ten o'clock, and let it down on a string from the upper gallery. When it went off, it would awaken not only Daddy, but also the entire family. Daddy would wait a few minutes, and if George didn't get going, would reach out of bed and pick up a shoe, and drop it heavily on the floor. In another few minutes, if George still hadn't left, Daddy would boom out: "Sis! It's ten o'clock!"

Those twenty-foot ceilings at the Mansion made that clock hard to reach. Many times George climbed the rose trellis and cut the clock down, if it could be reached from the trellis. I have marveled that George is so fond of Dorrace, in spite of her many childhood pranks, for which he could then have gleefully choked my little sister.

A small power boat owned by the state and used on the Gulf coast in the enforcement of fishing laws, had been named by the officials of the Fish and Game Commission the *Ouida Ferguson*, in honor of me. Our family spent two weeks at Rockport during the summer of 1916, and enjoyed several cruises on my namesake. When the Ferguson star was in eclipse, and there were new incumbents to flatter, the name was changed. The boat was lost in a storm soon after. Everybody with any knowledge of marine superstitions knows that it is bad luck to change the name of a boat unless the ownership is changed. Had these officials had less political sense and more nautical knowledge the state might not have lost its boat.

And now, for a while, there must be only grim humor, if there is any humor, in this account of the lives of the Fergusons of Texas. We come to the impeachment.

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## CHAPTER XIII

# The Impeachment Trial

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NO DOUBT many people into whose hands this volume will fall will expect me to go into lengthy explanation and defense of Jim Ferguson. This I shall not do for two reasons: our friends do not expect me to do it, and our enemies wouldn't believe me. The impeachment charges have been hashed and rehashed in the press. I shall present my own views and quote only a part of Governor Ferguson's defense of himself.

Suffice it to say that \$156,000 that he borrowed, and about which such a hullabaloo was raised when he refused to divulge the name of the lender, was an honest debt, and strictly a business transaction. It was well secured and was paid with one of the best black land farms in rich Bell County, Texas.

The passion and prejudice of the hour led otherwise honest people into doing and saying things that they would not have dreamed of under normal circumstances.

The same charges that were brought in the Senate, sitting as a court of impeachment, were brought in the Travis County Court. This was done in an effort to give the charges in the Senate kangaroo court a more legal aspect. My father pleaded to be tried first by the court, rather than by prejudiced, ambitious, tinhorn politicians, but this plea was denied and the Senate trial came first. The court charges were used only as a psychological background on which to build the case and give it legal flavor. The fact that the court



charges were all dismissed as soon as Daddy was impeached proves my statement. They had served their purpose. The office was all the politicians wanted, and they knew all the time that their charges would not hold up in court.

The impeachment of Jim Ferguson didn't happen in the twinkling of an eye at the close of that long, hot summer of 1917. It had its inception early in 1915, when Daddy had had the gall to suggest to the president of the University of Texas that there were some irregularities in that institution that should be investigated. Although the Ferguson administration sponsored the largest appropriation that had ever been allotted to that institution to date, at the same time the University faction resented any suggestion from the Governor as to the management of the school. The higher education group further resented the fact that Governor Ferguson had supported and signed a bill in his first administration allocating a million dollars to rural education. This was in the days before the New Deal, when a million dollars was a lot of money!

Further antagonizing the University faction and arousing their jealousy, the Thirty-fifth Legislature, during the second Ferguson administration, appropriated two million dollars for rural education and for high schools in small towns. This same legislature appropriated only slightly over a million, six hundred thousand dollars to the University. This bill the Governor had refused to sign because of certain alleged irregularities in that institution. Chief among these was, to use railroad parlance, the practice of carrying "dead men on the pay roll." The fact that the Governor asked the president to explain some of the items before he would sign the bill was deeply resented by the president and the faculty.

Egged on by certain Austin citizens to investigate what was going on out on University Hill, Daddy stubbornly refused to sign the \$1,600,000 appropriation. In a crusading spirit he challenged one of the strongest organizations in the state, the University Ex-Students' Association. This organization was incited to action by the president of the University, a silver-tongued ex-preacher. In a passionate plea to the ex-students Dr. Vinson sounded the alarm that the gov-

ernor of the state was attempting to ruin the University. Like so many sheep, the members started pouring into Austin to save their alma mater from Farmer Jim.

Conveniently forgotten was the fact that Jim Ferguson had put through and signed a bill in 1915 appropriating more money for education than had any previous governor, thereby raising the tax rate to a then unheard-of high figure. A high tax rate is political suicide, but Jim Ferguson risked his political hide in his first administration, in order that the University might grow and expand with the Texas free school system.

It is interesting to note in passing that the persons most avid in ribbing Daddy to straighten out the University were the first to jump the fence and howl the loudest that the University was being ruined when they received their orders from the Ex-Students' Association.

When they heard that the Governor was meeting with the Board of Regents of the University, the students marched on the Capitol, carrying banners most insulting to the Governor. This parade was carried out with the full knowledge and sanction of the faculty. It was a lark for the students. I sat on the front gallery of the Mansion and watched them march through the Capitol grounds, led by the band playing "*The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You*," their banners waving in the breeze. I thought it most amusing. I well remember Mamma's turning on me in one of her psychic moods and saying:

"If you could only realize how serious this thing is, Ouida, I am sure you wouldn't think it quite so funny!"

She was right. That parade stirred the ranks on both sides of the University question. The advisability of having fraternities and sororities on the campus caused as much uproar as did any other phase of University operation. Because Woodrow Wilson had put fraternities off the campus at Princeton, Daddy branded them a detriment to the University of Texas and urged the Regents to abolish them. He charged that they were made up of rich snobs and were a deterrent to democracy in the school.

In 1917 he made a speech along that line in North Texas, saying, in effect, that I would not go with a "barb" because,



if I did, I would get no dates with fraternity men. He had observed that I went only with fraternity men; the rest was his own deduction. This story was in the press. It put me in bad with both crowds, because it made me appear to be seeking fraternity dates, while I avoided having dates with "barbs." This was certainly not true. It so happened that all the men I knew were fraternity men. Socially, the repercussions of the speech were tragic. At sixteen, such things seem tremendously important.

I turned my wrath on the Governor full blast! Once or twice he tried to argue with me as we sat together on the big sofa in the front hall of the Mansion late one evening. It did him no good. He had used me as a political guinea pig, and that was unworthy of him.

Whenever Daddy hurt Dorrace's feelings, she would go into her shell and weep; I employed stronger tactics. That is why Daddy and I had a better understanding of each other; we could fight and still be friends. Mamma said: "When Ouida and her father lock horns, it is a case of 'Greek meets Greek!'" Dorrace's method was far more effective than mine, because, to most men, nothing is quite so disarming as tears. But my way was more fun.

Though my lengthy argument failed to convince the Governor on the fraternity subject, he did not use me again as a "horrible example."

We spent the first part of that summer of 1917 on our ranch in Bosque County, Texas, where Daddy had built for us a sweet little five-room cottage. It was painted red and trimmed in white, like our first little home in Belton. Because it commanded a great sweeping view of the valley of the Bosque River, Daddy named the place "Bonita Vista."

We used our old horse, Prince, to wander over the ranch and hunt wild plums. The carriage could go where the automobile couldn't. The place had a lighting system, and in the barn was a storage box that held 2,000 pounds of ice. Mamma took along her twin-six Packard and her chauffeur. The Fergusons rusticated with all the comforts of home.

Dorrace and I were "town girls." When night fell we assiduously pulled down every shade. Daddy would tease us and ask: "Why do you do that? Don't you want the cattle

to see you go to bed?" The truth was, the loneliness of the ranch country and the big dark outside further frightened us.

Even with all these comforts it was far from a pleasant summer. Soon after our arrival at the ranch I was thrown from a horse and sustained a brain concussion. Mamma went through the mental and physical agony of nursing a delirious child for days. Daddy never stopped teasing me later about the many yards of concrete he had to use to fill the crater my hard head made when I hit the ground.

All this time we were on the ranch, there were, like the mutterings and distant lightning of a coming storm, repercussions from the vetoing of the University appropriations. Daddy kept such matters to himself, so there is no telling how many threatening letters the Governor received that summer. I received one, an unsigned threat to kill Daddy if he spoke at Valley Mills the next week. It said: "He will die with his boots on if he attempts to speak." It terrified me!

Daddy made the Valley Mills speech as scheduled. When I heard his car nearing our house on his return, and I knew no harm had befallen him, I offered a prayer of thanksgiving.

In the quarter of a century that Daddy was the stormy petrel of Texas politics, I do not believe that my sister Dorrace ever received an anonymous letter or threatening telephone call. I have had bushels of crank letters and threats. Even when we were out of active participation in politics, I received one occasionally. My pet crank was a woman who continued for years to advise me over the telephone.

Governor Ferguson was compelled to make weekly trips to Austin that summer to attend to the business of recruiting the Army. An aviation ground school was started on University property in Austin, and a mechanics' school at Camp Mabry. There was an officers' training school at Leon Springs, near San Antonio, that trained most of the line officers of the 36th Division. Daddy signed the commission of every Texas officer of the 36th Division. He was always very proud of that fact, because of the glorious record this Division made overseas. There were also divisional training



camps at Houston, Waco, Fort Worth and San Antonio.

That summer, after an early supper, in the cool of the evening we would often drive to Clifton, a small town eight miles from our ranch house, or in the opposite direction to Meridian, which was three miles nearer us. Daddy and Mamma had many friends in both of these small towns. It was through my overhearing Daddy's conversation with one of these friends that I first learned that his impeachment was brewing.

As we drove home after dark, I was afraid my anonymous correspondent might be waiting for Daddy at the gate. Long before we reached it I started begging to be allowed to open the gate. I was not afraid that anybody would shoot into the automobile, but I was afraid an assassin might take a shot at Daddy as he got out of the car. Daddy would scold me for being such a coward.

I resolved to use other tactics. I talked with our chauffeur, a white man who had been with us for years. Bill agreed with me that there *was* danger in Daddy's getting out at the gate. Consequently, we got a pistol for Bill. Whenever we started back to the ranch house from a trip, I would run to get on the front seat of the car with Bill. He would be out on the running board before the car came to a stop at the ranch gate; I would pull up the brake and bring the car to a stop. Before Daddy could realize what we were putting over on him, we would be through the danger zone.

One terribly hot summer afternoon Daddy had come in from the north pasture and was sitting in the living room having a glass of cool water when the telephone rang. It was Austin calling. Daddy turned away from the phone with a remark, the last sentence of which later became a byword in Texas. He said:

"Well, I have got to go to Austin tonight. My friends tell me the University crowd is trying to make serious trouble for me. It does seem that a lot of people have gone hog-wild on the subject of higher education."

When Daddy returned to the ranch four days later, he told us to pack up and prepare to return to Austin. He could no longer remain with us on the ranch. Speaker Fuller of the House of Representatives had called the legislature to

convene August 1, to consider impeachment charges against the Governor. Daddy added his own call to Fuller's call, stating that he welcomed an investigation.

There had been an investigation of the Governor's official acts during a special session in the spring prior to this, and nothing had been found to be irregular. That had been a defeat for the University crowd. Now, they had been able to make some trades, and thought they had enough votes to remove the Governor.

Some of the anti-Fergusonism was of a pretty low type. In the Spring Festival at Whitis School, I had been given as my part in the school play the role of "Sir Greed for Gold." I was too loyal to my father to even think of that as a "dig," though it was hardly subtle. My costume was a long, orange sateen cape, which I thought very becoming with my long, golden curls. One day I chanced to overhear one of the teachers remark to another how appropriately I was cast. There was a sneer in her voice.

My first hot impulse was to "tell them off," and refuse the part; on second thought it seemed best to go through with it and ignore the ugly person who had meant to hurt me. I was never happy at Whitis School after that. A few friends were there, but on the whole, I hated the entire "kit and bilin'" of them. I begged my parents to send me to another school the next term, but they argued that it was better for me to stay at Whitis and take the punishment, because of making my college entrance credits. I am being honest about myself, though it would be prettier to pretend I was a sweet martyr. I was neither a martyr nor sweet!

As the impeachment trial progressed in August, our fair-weather friends began to quit us. Some of them would barely speak to a Ferguson on the street. These same porch-climbers had rushed us off our feet when we first came to the Mansion. Others of them now stared and whispered as we passed. Many of these same old friends (?) were the first to rush to see us when the Ferguson family returned to power and the Mansion seven years later. Some of them even sent flowers! Most of these estimable folk are still living in Austin. The Ferguson and Nalle families also live in Austin.



We earnestly strive to forgive and forget the past, and live peaceably with our neighbors.

I do not say that all the people in Austin are "porch-climbers," by any means. We Fergusons are not unappreciative of the many loyal friends who stood by us through all our trouble. We have many true and faithful friends in Austin who have fought our battles in season and out of season.

Through all the trying weeks of the impeachment trial Daddy was exceptionally gay when he was at home with his family. I asked to be allowed to go to the Capitol and sit by him.

He refused to let me go, saying: "This is just a dirty piece of politics, and I will not have my family dragged into it."

My motives in asking to go were heroic, if naive. I knew of a child, who, a few years before, had helped materially in clearing its father of accusations by appearing at his side during his trial. I worshipped my daddy, and I was anxious to help him in any way that I could. But he would not agree to my attending the trial.

Mamma and Daddy seemed to be keeping their emotions in check for each other. Not once did I hear any weeping or complaints from either of them. Nobody was sad. The household ran as usual, until the Ferguson clan descended on us en masse. We appreciated their comforting words, their sympathy, and their offers to help in every way possible, but their attitude was, at times, a trial in itself.

Aunt Kate, Daddy's sister, and twelve years his senior, felt disgraced. When she wept I could have cheerfully biffed her one. She would go into lengthy detail about how much she loved Daddy; how, when she was a little girl of fourteen she had taken full charge of him when another little brother was born.

"He was my baby!" she would moan. I decided Aunt Kate was nursing and petting her own feelings, sympathizing with herself. If she really loved Daddy, she would have kept herself cheerful, as we did, and would have tried in every way to boost him. I was not too tolerant of human failings at my teen-age.

On the other hand, there was Uncle Joe Lee Ferguson;

he was Daddy's eldest brother. He came to lend his help. Uncle Joe Lee lived on a ranch in West Texas most of his life.

He was always possessed of an inordinate family pride. One of Daddy's real fears during the impeachment trial was that Uncle Joe Lee was going to kill somebody. Daddy would plead with him to keep calm, and not to lose his head. His brother Jim was in trouble, and they couldn't tell lies on Jim and get by with it!

Despite what I have said of the "fair-weather" friends, there was never a family in public life in Texas more blessed with loyal friends than were the Fergusons. Their affectionate kindness during those trying weeks can never be forgotten. I can honestly add that we strove then and are still striving to remember only the kindness of the people. My father's advice was: "Don't hate anybody. That only takes up your time."

I admit it has been hard to keep from "dividing the sheep from the goats," but this we have not done. We Fergusons believe in retribution, and that people reap what they sow. Only give it time, and "All that goes over the devil's back is sure to come under his belly and buckle!"

When the trial started Daddy, knowing it was all politics, was sure that he had a clear majority in his favor. Gradually, however, the senators began to quit the Ferguson camp and join the enemy, yielding to the pressure brought to bear on them as individual solons. Joe Bailey, seeing his chance to get even with Jim Ferguson for the licking he had given him at El Paso, at the Democratic State Convention in 1914, wielded all his influence to change the votes of several senators, and was successful in one instance. The Ex-Students' Association was, of course, the most powerful force against us; several senators belonged to it.

The fight had raged about our heads for fifty days. The rank and file of trusted friends grew thinner, as they took fright, like sheep, and forsook the Fergusons. Finally, there remained but four who could not be swayed. Their names shall ever be engraved upon our hearts: Senators Woodward, Parr, Hall and Clark. They stood unafraid to fight for what they deemed the right. Good things and bad come in cycles.



The day was finally to dawn when the people would speak, and justice again be done.

To the end Daddy would not hear to his family's attending the trial. At the dinner table the evening before the vote was taken, he told us that it was going against him, but that on the morrow he was going to make the speech of his life in one last effort to turn the tide. I asked to be allowed to hear that speech but he said "No."

I was determined to hear what Daddy was going to say. George Nalle was calling that evening. I asked him to take me to the trial next morning.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### The Final Note

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PANDEMONIUM was reigning on the floor of that senatorial kangaroo court when George Nalle and I arrived in the Texas Senate Chamber that twenty-second day of September 1917. It was much more like a political rally than a solemn court of justice.

I do not remember how we gained entrance to this august chamber, but I well remember the peering eyes of the relatives and friends of the senators who had come to hear Jim Ferguson make his last plea. I stood during the entire speech, which lasted well over an hour, and listened with a heavy heart as Daddy began:\*

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Senate:

A long time ago, when I was a school boy, I remember reading a little rhyme that went something like this:

It is easy, when destiny proves kind  
With full spread sails, to run before the wind  
But those who against stiff gales would careering go  
Must be at once resolved and skillful too.

Like burning coals these words seared my mind. Today they stand alone in my memory every time that speech is mentioned.

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\* Excerpts from speeches quoted in this chapter are taken from stenographic record of the trial, and published by A. C. Baldwin & Sons, State Printers, Austin, Texas.



This morning I appear before this august body . . . as the chief actor in this momentous proceeding, in which not only you, under your official oaths, are deeply concerned, but throughout the confines of this great State the great yeomanry, the great people of . . . the greatest state in the Union . . . are interested in the results of this trial. Realizing and imbued with the deep solemnity of this occasion, I appreciate the great necessity not only of not trying to deceive you, but of not trying to deceive myself. . . .

Daddy certainly must have had his tongue in his cheek as he addressed them as "this august body."

What are the conditions that confront your respondent at this time? If a man down in the Travis County Court should be tried, if he should be charged with a crime against the laws of the State, the Court sets the day when he should reply and answer the charge against him. . . .

I mention this to show you with what certainty, with what solemnity and with what supreme respect for the rights of the citizens, the courts and the legislative body of the land have provided that every citizen might enjoy a fair and impartial trial upon the merits of his case. Every citizen of the land has this right guaranteed to him and given to him, and every man charged with crime throughout the confines of this State enjoys the privileges of these rights guaranteed under the laws and Constitution of the State, except one individual, and that is the Governor of the State on trial for his official position.

That leads me to what the lawyers have been saying in your midst about the right of this Senate to try the Governor of this State. Ah! It has been said, and will be contended hereafter, this is not a criminal case. Yet, my friends, if there was any doubt about it — about whether this is a criminal case or not — every fair-minded man must yield that contention when he hears the special rule sent up by the Senator from Tarrant this morning. The rule was that when this argument is ended each Senator shall be required to rise from his seat and vote what? 'Aye' or 'Nay'? NO. 'Guilty' or 'Not Guilty!' Should there be any doubt in the mind of any fair-minded man that I am on trial as a criminal in your presence? . . .

And so, I say, it brings us by an object lesson, as it were, to the conditions under which I am being tried before this Senate. The law guarantees to a Negro crapshooter, it guarantees to a Negro bootlegger, it guarantees to the veriest criminal in the land, a full definition and a full description of the crime upon which you are going to try him for his liberty; and yet I defy General Crane, upon his time coming to speak to this Senate, to put his finger upon any crime for which the Governor of Texas may be impeached. Here I am put on trial for an office which all courts of the land recognize as private property. . . . The constitutional provision guarantees to me, as well as to you, that I shall not be deprived of my property without due process of law.

His argument on this point, to me, seemed as clear as ABC; and the thought of his not receiving a fair trial made me dig my fingernails into the palms of my hands; I suppressed a great desire to scream out in protest of the consummate prejudice of Daddy's jurors. To be denied a fair and impartial trial, what could be more un-American! But I controlled myself because I knew that Daddy would want me to. I knew too that his fear that I might not control my emotions was one big reason he had not allowed me to attend the entire trial. I was determined not to "act like a woman," as men so often accuse us.

There were moments when my consciousness suffered a complete blackout, and I would lose parts of Daddy's arguments. As my mind would wander back, feeling like a pariah, I would look up at George; he would smile at me, and I knew all was not lost.

Entirely free of bitterness, Daddy continued, in a well-modulated voice, to delineate his side of this great controversy, of which he was the central figure. He was not in the least broken in fighting spirit; at the same time, it was obvious that he was maintaining a controlled dignity. His suppressed emotions and the absence of his old time flare for personal appeal seemed to throw him out of character. But then, as I look back on it, the whole thing was out of character.

I have often thought, as I have read and reread that



speech in recent years, that had Daddy controlled his temper in the beginning of the University controversy as perfectly as he did in his final plea for exoneration (no, I should not call this his final plea, for that was to come years later), things would have been different. But I have always come back to the question: Would we Fergusons want it different—would we rewrite our history if we could? The answer is no. It was hard, yes. Mistakes—Daddy made plenty of them; but we must view the picture, and what was to follow, as a whole. The price he and his family paid was worth the pain. In short, we would live it over again, if it were necessary.

Although Daddy controlled his passion as he spoke to that court of impeachment, the seething crowd did not. The Chair constantly interrupted the Governor to demand order. The very air of that Senate Chamber breathed "Hang him!" On numerous occasions the Chair was compelled to appeal to the Sergeant at Arms to calm the crowd, and several times the Chair threatened to clear the galleries if quiet was not resumed.

One group of boys, presumably University students, working on the psychology of mob pressure, kept up a continuous uproar in spite of repeated threats of expulsion. No one can ever deny that that trial lacked dignity and dispassionate decorum.

Never once in Daddy's entire speech did he appeal to sympathy either for himself or for his family. In that connection he had this to say:

If I appeal to sympathy, that would be the exercise of a right which I have not and will not urge upon any Senator. I want to appeal in the language of the Roman statesman who said that in matters of right there was not one law for Athens and another for Rome, but for all men in all ages and all times there remained the eternal law of justice, and I appeal only to that law. If you, in the exercise of your oath, convict me and find me guilty of a crime not defined by law or by the Constitution, then you have denied to me simple justice, you have denied to me the same right that is guaranteed to the most humble citizen in the land and the veriest criminal in the land.

Mixed with my resentment of the utter injustice of the trial, and of the charges against Daddy, was a feeling that he would be cleared. I could not see how it could go against him, although he had told us the night before that his enemies had succeeded in turning a sufficient number of senators against him to bring about his impeachment. Perhaps it was wishful thinking — or was it my firm belief in Daddy's innocence? It might have been my adoration of him that made him appear to me invincible before the enemy. To me he had always been a tower of mental and physical strength, on which I had leaned in time of trouble. Consequently, I could not bring myself to believe that even prejudice and injustice could ever prevail against him. Or could it have been my sixteen years that sustained me, to stand there calmly before the public gaze, for well over an hour, as I kept telling myself that Daddy would turn the tide, some way, somehow.

Before taking up the charges against him, one by one, Daddy quoted the following from a speech made by the counsel for the State:

I want to call your attention to one astounding statement that was made yesterday by the counsel for the Managers, and I know you heard it and I know you must have thought about it, but I again want to call it to your attention because it is the crux of the whole argument in this case. Mr. Harris told you yesterday — listen, refer to the stenographer's report to see if I am not correct. He said, 'We are not asking the Senate of Texas to impeach the Governor because he did not appoint another man in Frank Swor's place. We are not asking the Senate' — and he said, 'I admit that is not sufficient ground to impeach him. We are not asking the Senate of Texas,' he said, 'to impeach the Governor because he would not tell where he borrowed the \$156,000. We are not asking the Senate of Texas to impeach the Governor upon the ground of that fifty-six hundred dollar item. We are not asking the Senate of Texas to impeach the Governor upon any one count, but it is upon twenty-one counts piled up like stovewood. We are going to establish a grab-net machine here and admit as we do that none of them are sufficient within themselves;



on general principles we are going to say that the Governor of the State ought to be impeached.'

That statement alone, by the counsel for the State, should have cleared Jim Ferguson.

Proceeding to discuss each one of the twenty-one charges brought against him, Daddy began:

The first charge is that there was paid from the funds of the Canyon City Normal School deposited with the Temple State Bank on August 23, 1915, a note of \$5,000 together with \$600 interest due by James E. Ferguson to the First National Bank of Temple, Texas; that said amount has never been refunded to the State of Texas; that in part payment of the total due for the building of the Canyon City Normal College he used other funds, a portion of which belonged to the State of Texas and the balance in his hands as Governor and deposited to his credit as Governor in the American National Bank, which act constitutes a violation of law.

Daddy discussed the legal aspects of his rights in connection with this money at great length, but the gist of his defense, at least to the lay mind, is best summed up in his closing words on that charge:

I had given Governor Colquitt my receipt for every dollar of the Canyon City fund. Bad man as I might be, and some of them would have you think I am, certainly I could not have been so foolish as to have thought I might use that money to my permanent use and benefit without being found out. It is ridiculous, and you know it as well as I.

On that first charge twenty-seven senators voted guilty while four voted not guilty. Senators Clark, Hall, Woodward and Parr cast the negative votes. In registering his vote Senator Clark had this to say:

I vote 'no,' on Article 1 of the impeachment charges against Governor James E. Ferguson, for the reason that the undisputed proof is that Governor Ferguson had no

knowledge whatever of the use of the \$5600 of the Canyon City Normal Fund in the payment of an indebtedness of his; that it unquestionably and without any contradiction occurred by reason of a mistake on the part of the officers of the bank, with which Governor Ferguson was wholly unacquainted. And that in addition to all this, he has paid to the State of Texas every cent of money ever entrusted to him as Governor in every and any way, whatsoever, and does not owe the State of Texas one cent or one penny, having scrupulously accounted for all moneys entrusted to him.

The second charge also dealt with the Canyon City Normal. Insurance money in the amount of \$101,000 had been turned over to the Governor, which money he had deposited in banks in which he was interested either as a stockholder, or as a borrower from the bank. At least, that was the charge. In true Ferguson diction, Daddy answered that charge:

Now, my friends, I want to call your attention right here to facts that certainly bear upon the question of whether I wanted to profit out of that money that I deposited in the Temple State Bank. When the first deposit was sent to Temple, opening up the Governor's account, I had the secretary to write a letter, which was exhibited here after an attempt to withhold it from your information had been made, stating, 'I simply want you to keep this money on deposit,' meaning of course not only that deposit, but the rest of the items which made up the deposit. If I had wanted to profit by it, certainly I would not have written that letter to my own private bank telling them explicitly not to loan any money against the account.

But they say I did not put it in the Treasury. There is the great issue made in this case. I can deal with all the other charges in reference to the Secretary of State, in reference to the Commissioner of Insurance and Banking, in reference to this fund—I can treat these questions all together, and in the interest of time I will do so. Now, they say I should have put the money in the Treasury and say I violated Article 96 of the Criminal Code which provides—listen!—that any agency of the government who is by law a receiver or depositary of money, or, who shall fail to put money in the Treasury when it is open, shall be guilty of a felony, with such and such a penalty.



Now, then, I say, here is the great crime. When I came to Austin, what did I find here? I found, as I stated in my testimony, and it has not been denied in any particular here, that for twenty years nobody had paid any attention to the statute — because the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the Secretary of State and the other officials who as incidental to their duties came into possession of money were not by law receivers or depositaries of money, and therefore, that act could not apply to them; the receipt of their money was only an incident to the other duties of their offices. Therefore, even though for the sake of argument it might be considered it had been wrongfully done, as long as it was done by an officer of the government — unless it was done by an officer of the government who was a receiver or depositary of money it could be no violation of law.

But, oh! they say I ought to have kept the Secretary of State from putting that money in any bank. That shows just how unreasonable the charges are. They contend in one breath that I ought to be impeached because I undertook to tell the Board — suggest to the Board of Regents what it should do, and in the next breath they say I ought to be impeached because I did not tell some officer of the government what he should not do; in one breath they say it is a crime to try to suggest to the head of a department what he should do, and in the next breath they say it is a crime and you ought to be impeached because you failed to tell some fellow what he ought to do.

The whole proposition is, I put that money in a Temple bank and not in an Austin bank. I wouldn't be on charge here today if the Austin bankers and the University crowd had not got together and said, 'This man won't do; he has undertaken to exercise the rights given to him under the Constitution by inquiring into what we are doing out at the University. He has undertaken to say that this right which we have so long enjoyed here in Austin, that of having all the people's money for our own use and benefit, cannot continue. We cannot have any such usurper of our sources of gain and profit.'

You say that it is a crime because I had stock in the bank. The University, as the record shows, had on deposit with the American National Bank in Austin an account running for ten years before that and that was not denied — showing what? That they had an account there running

never lower than \$38,000 and up as high as \$157,000, a continuous account that the University had had for four long years, and nobody ever got together and concocted a plan to indict somebody or impeach somebody for putting that money into the American National Bank of Austin without interest.

It is a great crime for me to put money in the Temple bank, but a member of the Board of Regents, Major Littlefield, who owns the controlling interest in the American National Bank, in Austin; he is permitted to do that and is held up as a great citizen.

Entirely abandoning his restrained calm, Daddy proceeded to the main real and only issue of his trial: The University question. In fiery Ferguson fashion he excoriated his selfish enemies out on University Hill. As proof that had the University question not arisen he would not have been on trial that day he offered an article from the *Austin American* of Sunday, August 26, reading:

#### THE UNIVERSITY TRIUMPHANT

*Lieutenant Governor W. P. Hobby is now acting Governor of Texas, and Governor James E. Ferguson stands suspended and is out of office pending his trial by the Senate on twenty-one articles of impeachment adopted by the House of Representatives after an investigation lasting over three weeks. The trial in the Senate will begin next Wednesday. The investigation and the causes leading up to it have been thoroughly discussed and are well understood, and the results obtained by the official vote in the House and the presentment of the articles of impeachment to the Senate have brought the people of Texas a victory.*

LISTEN —

*And the presentment of the articles of impeachment to the Senate have brought to the people of Texas a victory of such vast importance that they can afford to ignore any criticism the outside world may make. They have saved their University, and that was the big question involved.*

Involved in what? In the presentment of twenty-one



articles of impeachment against the Governor of Texas. That was the big question involved.

The Austin *American* believes, and so stated at the beginning of the investigation, that barring all other questions involved, impeachment proceedings would follow; that was the only way in which the appropriation sufficient to maintain the University for the next two years could be obtained.

The Constitution stood in the way. It had been legally vetoed, and the only way in which they could get the money with which to continue their unholy spree of an educated hierarchy out there, was to rend in twain the Governor of this State and bring against his fair name and the name of his family, articles of impeachment — not because of a matter of policy, but because of a matter of appropriation; not because of any right and wrong, but because of weighing so much gold against human happiness, so much greed for lust and profit against human character — that was the big question involved and that was the only way of securing an appropriation sufficient to maintain the University for the next two years. It was of no consequence to them, and, as Mr. Harris said, that out of the twenty-one trials added, they could not put their finger on a single item that they thought was sufficient to impeach the Governor — but that was the only way they could get *money, money, money, the root of all evil*.

At the top of his voice Daddy shouted, "*money, money, money, the root of all evil*." This brought down the house. The galleries cheered lustily and continued cheering until the chairman rapped for order and warned:

"If we have any repetition of that, the galleries will be cleared."

Senator Hudspeth said: "It certainly ought to be done, Mr. President."

The Chair said: "It will be."

Senator Hudspeth commented: "This is not a vaudeville performance, and those people ought to understand it, those sitting in the galleries."

No vaudeville performance? To many of the spectators it was a lark. In spite of the Texas heat, for remember this

was the height of "dog days" in Texas and before the advent of air-conditioning, there were dozens of people who brought their lunch each day during the trial and remained for every word of the testimony. Curiosity brought some, while hate of Jim Ferguson brought another group. Then there were Daddy's friends, who attended the trial religiously because they wanted him to know that they were there to help if they could. This group was a great consolation to him in his darkest hours. Many of these friends would call at the Mansion in the evenings. Some came repeatedly to reassure Daddy that, should the Senate impeach him, the people would rise up in their might at the next election and return him to office. Others came bearing flowers or candy and made no mention of the trial.

Just as Daddy shouted, "*Money, money, money, the root of all evil!*" my eyes chanced to scan the galleries. Packed like sardines in a can, the throng resembled a political rally more than it did a solemn trial. There were people of all ages and from all walks of life. Some were dressed just to be seen while others came to see and hear. The air, heavy with the odor of sweat and perfume, was kept in motion by the fanning of the throng. Some waved palmetto fans, while others used a folded newspaper or their hats in a supreme effort to gain relief from the oppressive heat.

Once during the speech my eyes chanced to fall on Red Jones, from East Texas. Red's hair was rough and unkept. There is no doubt he still had the red sand of East Texas between his toes. Yet, in that rugged body beat the truest heart that ever blessed this earth. His friend, Jim Ferguson, was in trouble, so he remained on hand just in case he was needed to fight, shoot or just persuade.

This horny-handed son of toil had visited us the night before at the Mansion. During his call Daddy had escorted him upstairs and made him stretch out on Sam Houston's bed with his clothes and boots on. Daddy said: "Red, just stretch out and relax on the bed of that great patriot and see how it feels." Red stretched out on the rose taffeta coverlet, and a pretty picture he made! I don't think he relaxed much. Certainly he was not relaxed the next morning when



I saw him sitting in the gallery of the Senate Chamber, resting his elbow on his knee, with his chin in the palm of his hand. His face was tense and his brow was knit as he strained to catch every word Daddy uttered in that long speech.

In discussing the charge made against Daddy that he was in contempt of the House of Representatives and the Senate because he refused to tell from whom he had borrowed \$156,000 Daddy had this to say:

To serve the people of Texas is a great distinction. To have the office of Governor is a great distinction. But for a man to be conscious that he had betrayed his trust, that he had misled his friends, that he had broken his word, would take away from him every personal satisfaction that he had ever received any honor or been entitled to any honor, and so upon this ground I refused to testify, as I had a legal right to do, and which the courts, if you would put it in the courts, would demonstrate that I had a legal right to, and you as fair-minded men ought to be liberal enough in the absence of any proof to say that you are not justified in convicting me and finding me guilty upon a mere matter of suspicion.

Suspicion about what? Is it any crime for a man to borrow \$156,000? Is there a man in this Senate, if he needed the money for a purpose and a man would tell him he would loan him the money, if he would not tell about it, that would not borrow the money under the same condition? Not a one of you.

Let's be honest with each other. Remember the obligation of man to man. You would have borrowed the money. As Senator McNealus told me the other day, 'I know the reason you would not tell where you got the \$156,000.' I said: 'Why?' He said, 'Because you know it would break up this Senate and they would all be running down to the same place to see if they could get some of the same money.'

This remark brought prolonged laughter and cheers from the gallery. Senator McNealus' face flushed as he sprang to his feet shouting:

"Mr. President, will the Governor please state whether or not that was said in a jocular manner?"

Daddy replied: "Yes, sir, but many a truth is uttered in a joke. At the same time the Senator has not denied the fact and I think his failure to deny would be no exemplification of disrespect to say under the same condition if he needed money he would borrow it from anybody that wanted to loan it to him."

Each time I read the transcript of that speech and come to the word "need" my blood boils. Daddy did not need that money — he just thought he did! Credit has ruined more people than any other one thing. Mamma's black land farm in Bell County went to guarantee that loan. It was a straight business deal! At a time when Daddy should have been marking time with his personal business, he borrowed this sizable sum, bought more farm land and inaugurated a vast program of farm development. As Mamma so often remarked: "Jim has always thought he should buy every piece of land that adjoins his." Such a scheme, to have succeeded, would have taken his entire time and talent.

Simultaneously with his personal estate expansion, Daddy inaugurated the penitentiary farm-expansion program. The penitentiary program was a great success because the convicts were working for that pardon consideration that he, as governor, had promised them. In the case of his private business, those working for him took the occasion of his being away from the farms most of the time while he was tied up with State's business in Austin, to loaf on the job.

The gossip and speculation that went the rounds in Austin as to where Jim Ferguson borrowed the \$156,000 was unbelievable. Many irate members of both houses of the legislature were more consumed with curiosity than were they concerned with the harm done the state. They examined witness after witness in an effort to find a clue to the person who had made the loan. Finally, one day Pinkie Francis, who had never been overblessed with this world's goods but who was doubly blessed with native wit, arose on the floor of the House. Addressing his august colleagues, sarcastically he made some sally as to those who are possessed with an over-abundance of curiosity.

"You have failed," he continued, "to satisfy your curiosity



as to where Jim Ferguson borrowed the \$156,000. Well, if it will do you any good to know, I'll just tell you: I loaned it to him."

Ludicrous incidents of this type punctuated the entire proceedings. No one got a bigger chuckle out of Pinkie Francis' remarks than Daddy did.

In referring to another charge against him Daddy said:

They say I borrowed money up at the Temple State Bank. Yes, I did. The directors were satisfied with it. No man has been brought here to say — representative of the Temple State Bank — that they were dissatisfied with it. I said upon oath that they were satisfied with it. Don't you know that if there had been anything wrong about it they would have had all the people in Bell County here to testify to that fact? The former investigating committee in the spring of this year, in passing upon the very question of the overline that they talk about, said that 'based upon the good faith of the Governor and his solvent condition to pay or repay it, we do not think it is any ground for impeachment.'

Is there any difference in the facts now from what they were then? If it was not a crime then it is not a crime now, and that is the answer to that charge.

I have been in office a little over two years. I have received a little more than \$8,000 salary from the office. When I get through paying my lawyers in this case, the salary will have been wiped out. . . . I have paid for the labor at the Mansion; this Legislature has not seen fit to allow me for the labor at the Mansion — a rule not enforced against any other Governor of the State.

They talk about my using the credit of the State, and and you lose sight of the fact that Mr. Dunn of the Union National Bank told you that when I came into office the credit of the penitentiary had gotten to where nobody wanted to do business with it. Because of my financial standing, the State used my credit to get a hundred and twenty thousand dollars to put the penitentiary on a cash basis. If you are going to measure it by the question of cold-blooded dollars and cents the record is undisputed that I have done as much for the credit of the State as the State has done for my credit.

Remember that a million dollars is going to be turned

over to the profit of the penitentiary system that has been made under my management.

Don't forget that in the purchase of a farm I made \$250,000 for the State of Texas. You say that is my idea about it. On the floor of this Senate that purchase was questioned. I made the statement that they might get twelve prohibition bankers that live in the Panhandle of Texas and let them go over to see that farm and if they said it wasn't worth a hundred thousand dollars more than the State paid for it, I would resign from office. On the other hand, if it was proved that it was worth that much money a statement would be made, an admission would be made, that a misrepresentation had been made against the Governor of the State.

Turning to the accomplishments of his administration for the cause of labor, he shamed his prosecutors for what they were trying to do to him. Likewise he reminded them of the little red schoolhouses that he had built in the rural districts.

Are you going to lose sight of all this? Are you going to lose sight of the many other accomplishments that have been made for the upbuilding of this state?" he plead.

Gentlemen, you ought to take a broad view of this matter. General Crane, the Official Spanker, is going to romp all over me. I understand what is coming. It seems in the broad unequal strife of life, down the stream which I am now sailing, there is a boat named '*The M.M.Crane.*' Upon that boat nine or ten managers are demanding that he earn his money. When he begins to spank me and tell you what a bad man I am, remember it is nothing personal to him. It is because the managers tell him, 'Now, Crane, you must earn your money.' When he has said all the bitter things against me which he is going to say, ask yourselves the question whether or not after it is all said and done before High Heaven, conscious of your duty to yourselves, has the Governor been guilty of any wrong that would justify impeachment.

Lay aside the passions of the hour; try me like you would try anybody else, not any bias for me or any prejudice against me. Extend to me, as has been extended to all men in all ages, the eternal laws of justice. I thank you.



Daddy's final appeal to that court was over. Win, lose or draw that hurdle was behind him and a great relief it was. The Senate floor was cleared of spectators before the voting on the charges started. As George Nalle and I filed out of the Senate Chamber, one little group huddled together in our path and hissed us, but they were soon dispersed by our friends, who intervened with congratulations on Daddy's speech.

Of the twenty-one charges brought against James E. Ferguson, ten were sustained. Yes, Daddy stood impeached but the worst was yet to come: that final verdict.

Senator Lattimore gave a lengthy Majority Report in which his committee recommended:

That the said James E. Ferguson be and he is hereby removed from the office of Governor and be disqualified to hold any office of honor, trust or profit under the State of Texas.

In making the Minority Report Senator Bailey made a five thousand word address. At times his plea for a lenient verdict grew so fervent and so eloquent one would have almost thought he was our friend.

Senators, ought not we be careful? Ought not we to realize the responsibility that rests upon us here this morning?

Does this Constitution say anywhere that you shall disqualify him forever? It is silent as a tomb.

The Minnesota Constitution disqualifies a respondent for three years but the Minnesota Constitution does not say disqualify him forever.

Ah! some of you have said, 'This man will take this question to the people, he will be a candidate again. Would you, if sitting upon the jury, under your oaths, when the evidence was brought before you and it showed that a man ought to be acquitted, render, in violence to your conscience, a judgment against him and convict him simply because you were afraid of him. I would rather the people would pass upon this matter. If they want to pass upon it we ought to give them the privilege.

Let us accept this construction of the Constitution, let

us try him for what he has done, and not for fear of what he may do; if he wants to run for office that is his privilege, if the people want to say we are in error, that is their privilege; but I ask this Senate in all earnestness and seriousness to adopt this Minority Report, and only remove this man from office.

The great fear of a reprimand from the people was dictating the judgment against Jim Ferguson. If the question could only be kept out of the hands of the people, they thought they had nothing to fear.

Urging the adoption of the Majority Report, several Senators followed with short speeches of bitter denunciation of Daddy. But the most stirring appeal for a lenient judgment was made by Senator Hudspeth of El Paso. For thirty minutes he entreated that Senate:

I may yield my political future, but I shall not yield to a sentiment that proposes to bayonet a man after he is lying prostrate upon the ground.

Why do you ask that this man be placed in a class entirely by himself. I don't believe there is another man that has been bereft of his office where there is no pardoning power on this earth to restore it.

You could not have so forgotten yourself as to feel that in placing the brand of disgrace upon the brow of Jim Ferguson that you were not also inflicting it upon the dear wife and two dear little children that he loves as dearly, no doubt, as you love yours.

Immediately these senators who had voted to sustain the charges against Daddy but who were now willing to let the people pass on the question were accused of showing the white feather. Obviously their bosses cracked their whips again. When the vote was taken on whether or not James E. Ferguson was to be disqualified from holding "any office of honor, trust or profit under the State of Texas," these men went down the line with our enemies and voted to disqualify Daddy.

The terrible ordeal that had lasted for two long months was over.



Before the vote was taken in the Senate, Daddy had filed his resignation with the secretary of state. This resignation, coming prior to the final vote of impeachment, he thought would clear his record for the future. At least it was an attempt to tie a knot in the end of the rope and hang on.

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## CHAPTER XV

# Invictus!

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THAT chapter of our lives was closed. We turned the page, knowing that the end of the story was still to come.

Daddy and Mamma made a quick trip to Temple to arrange about getting possession of our house, rented during our residence in Austin.

It was decided that I should remain at Whitis School in Austin and finish my English and math, all I needed to graduate. I did not like the idea of being incarcerated in the camp of my enemies, but Mamma and Daddy said I was entirely too sensitive and that I imagined people were casting aspersions upon me. Mamma went right on buying and marking clothes and linens for me, preparatory to leaving me at Whitis as a boarding student. I was sunk in gloom.

Luck was with me! In the midst of all the turmoil of making ready to move, a friend marched in to see us one morning, breathing indignation. In her hand was a Whitis School catalog. The names of Governor and Mrs. Ferguson headed the list of references for the school. Evidently, this catalog had been printed in the spring, before Daddy's trouble started. Now, the Ferguson names on the list had been carefully erased!

I could not have asked for more. My "too sensitive nature" was exonerated. I would not have to remain at Whitis!

Throughout the entire trial Mamma had been a Spartan. There hadn't been a tear shed by any of the family. Mrs. Davis had made a dress for me, and the day before leaving



Austin, Mamma and I went to get the dress. The soft-spoken Mrs. Davis had been a sweet friend through all our trouble. When we went to take our leave, she told Mamma good-bye and expressed some kind words for Daddy that shattered Mamma's steel nerve. She broke down and wept bitterly. I shall never forget it. To me, it was a sign of weakness; I felt humiliated and ashamed that Mamma should lose control of herself — and away from home!

Through her tears, Mamma said: "It is a terrible thing to be tried and sold down the river by politicians who have their price! But never fear, Jim Ferguson will come back!" That made me feel much better; that was more like a Ferguson, I thought!

As soon as we reached the Mansion, I made a dash for my room, locked my door and had *my* cry.

My cousin, Fairy Ferguson (who had been Mamma's secretary for the past year), Daddy and I returned to Temple in Mamma's faithful old car. Mamma and Dorrace had gone ahead on the train. As the car rolled out from under the porte-cochere at the Mansion I was sad; but mingled with the sense of defeat was a deep feeling of relief to have the whole horrible affair over.

Before Mamma settled her household, she put Dorrace in the Temple High School, and took me back to her alma mater, Baylor College at Belton. (The name of the school was changed later to Mary Hardin - Baylor.)

We did not find things entirely rosy because of the feeling against the Fergusons; however, I was told that if I could pass the senior English examination in Baylor Academy, I would be allowed to enter Baylor College as a freshman. The math that I lacked for graduation at Whitis was not required for entrance at Baylor College. The English examination proved rather easy and I entered the school. I lived at home and commuted seven miles every day between Belton and Temple on the interurban streetcar. The family adjustment was soon effected, and we settled down to the routine of our old life.

In November 1917, Daddy started a weekly newspaper which he called *The Ferguson Forum*. The prohibitionists called it the *Ferguson For Rum*.

Jim Ferguson announced immediately that he would be a candidate for the nomination for governor on the Democratic ticket at the primaries the following summer. Invitations to speak at picnics and other gatherings poured in to him. He accepted as many as he could. Jim Ferguson was down but not out, and he still numbered his friends by the tens of thousands.

Each week he flayed his enemies in an editorial on the front page of *The Ferguson Forum*, and from every stump he took occasion to denounce in vitriolic language those who had sought to destroy him. As the Texas saying goes: "He poured it on 'em." Someone said of Daddy's speeches: "His homely philosophy and biting wit made him a master of the art of denunciation." Week in and week out, month in and month out, he hammered at his opposition with unflagging zeal, quoting Shakespeare: "I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked."

Immediately following the impeachment he filed libel suits against several of the big daily newspapers of Texas, seeking damages for statements that these papers had carried to the effect that Ferguson had received the famous \$156,000 from the German Kaiser. Daddy had steadfastly refused to divulge from whom he had borrowed this sum. One of the papers settled for \$10,000; another for \$15,000 and a third for \$3,500.

When the owner of the paper that settled for \$15,000 came to pay off for his paper's mistake, he brought cash. He, no doubt, feared that if he paid the sum by check, Daddy would carry a picture of the check in the columns of *The Ferguson Forum*.

Several months prior to this settlement by these three large dailies, Daddy had received a \$7,500 settlement from another paper for its having carried a story that he had sold land to the State of Texas.

Thirty-six thousand dollars was a lot of money, but it melted like a snowball in the Texas sun. Daddy was always a heavy borrower; the impeachment had thrown all his creditors into a panic to collect their money. He would comment: "Isn't it funny? When you can pay, they never



want their money, but if they think that you can't pay them, they want it right now!"

Mamma's fortune had also suffered heavy losses. During the summer of the trial Daddy had been compelled to neglect the management of the ranch and Mamma's farms. In an effort to help him she had borrowed against her own property — a noble act, but at the same time a grave mistake. During those first months we were back at home in Temple, Daddy spent much time trying to rehabilitate her interests. Between attempting to keep up his political "fences" and at the same time repair his wife's dwindling fortune, he was away from home much of the time.

Of that period, I heard him say, later: "In retrospect I see I've made many mistakes, but I believe that it was better that I kept on doing things. Nothing in life is static, and had I sat down and waited for some brighter day, I would have lost all. I believe I played my only possible role. Right or wrong, I kept on doing things."

While Daddy was busy with financial affairs, I was turning seventeen. My friendship with George Nalle was now, as the old phrase has it, fast "ripening into love." The impeachment had only served to cement more steadfastly George's love for me. Several ambitious Austin mammas had been quoted as rejoicing: "Well, now I guess Ouida Ferguson won't get George Nalle!"

The gossips didn't know George Nalle! The fact that I was the governor's daughter hadn't attracted him in the first place. The Governor's Mansion held no enticing charm for him. His grandmother, who was Mary Goodwin Hall, had been the first bride at the Governor's Mansion.

After our return to Temple, George was a regular week-end guest. In November 1917, he became an instructor in aerial navigation and photography at the ground school of military aeronautics in Austin.

I was seventeen in November 1917. George was only three years and three months my senior. He had often told me, "We are going to be married some day, but I suppose I'll have to wait for you to grow up."

On one of his regular week-end visits to Temple, he asked me to marry him early in the new year. I waited a few

weeks before I told my family that George and I wanted to be married in January or February of 1918. They laughed it off when I told them seriously that I was engaged to George. I started preparations for my wedding.

George brought me a diamond ring, but my family still considered my wedding as something in the far distant future. A few weeks later he brought me all of his mother's jewelry. Daddy continued to ignore my engagement, but Mamma began to wake up to the fact that this was serious.

I wanted a large church wedding. When I brought a pad and pencil to Daddy one evening and asked him to make a list of the people he wanted to invite to my wedding, he woke up to what was happening. Indeed, he woke up with a bang!

"You're too young to marry. I'll have no wedding in my family at seventeen," he stormed. "I want you to take a degree at Baylor. You remind me of a little country girl who went to the city with five dollars and bought the first thing she saw when she went into a store. I want you to look around; I want you to travel. You are too young to know what love is!"

Demurely, I let him have it: "Yes, I am only seventeen. I am only a little country girl. Since you were a country banker in Temple you have had your trips to New York and Washington. I have always begged to go with you, but I have never been out of Texas except when I went to a bullfight at Juarez! Whose fault is that?"

Next morning, in tears, I telephoned George Nalle in Austin. Would he please come up and talk to Daddy! George arranged to have another instructor take his afternoon classes. His grandmother's chauffeur drove the car alongside a moving train as it pulled out of Austin for Temple, and George jumped — and made it! This close connection added a romantic touch to a most unromantic crisis! I was being treated as a wayward child.

Daddy came home late from the office that afternoon. He greeted George cordially, but seemed to be dodging him. The minute dinner was over my parent announced that he had a date with Roy Campbell to play billiards. As he arose from the dinner table hastily, George asked to have a word with him — now!



"Why . . . yes, certainly; what is it, George?" Daddy asked him, now all innocence. It was Daddy's way to forget or ignore whatever distressed him.

In the presence of my entire family George said: "Governor, Ouida and I want to get married, and we want your consent."

Daddy gulped hard a time or two and caught his breath. Mamma told me later: "I have never seen Jim so completely disarmed. It is the first time I have ever seen him when he didn't have a quick answer."

Daddy finally got himself pulled together, and began: "George, you are a fine, clean young man, and I have nothing against you; but Ouida is too young to marry."

He looked at me, at Mamma, at Dorrace, at George, glaring from one to another of us, and then said:

"I have to go play billiards now; whatever her mother says will be all right with me," he ended helplessly. . . . The citadel had surrendered without a fight!

When Daddy and I arrived for my wedding at the little Episcopal church in Temple at 8:30 in the evening on February 6, 1918, we found it overflowing, mostly with uninvited guests, while many invited guests were standing on the sidewalk, like an Easter parade. My wedding was like a Billy Sunday meeting. The ushers could not control the crowd. The middle aisle had to be cleared of standees before we could march down the center to meet my heroic bridegroom. More people had come to gape at us than to wish us well, but we made the best of the situation and so did the mob.

Mamma wept, and they told me that as Daddy turned to leave the altar and take his place by her, there were tears in his eyes. In general, a good time was had by all! I know Daddy loved me devotedly, but I cannot yet believe that he wept at my wedding. If he did, it was the second time on record. The first time was when a man on the ranch failed to mark one of his registered heifers, and she got mixed up for keeps with the herd of grade cattle. Daddy was a man of deep feeling, far more tender-hearted than my mother; he had a most tolerant nature — but he was no weeper.

Back from our wedding trip to New Orleans, George and

I lived in the old Sampson home in Austin, with his Grandmother Sampson, his widowed aunt and an old maid cousin. As I look back on some of the things the young bride said and did in those first months in the Sampson family, I know they must have thought a Texas twister had struck them.

The Sampsons had come to Austin in 1854, and all these years had been living in that peculiar radiance shed on a hundred-year-old town by its First Families. My in-laws began to quiz me about my family tree; where it first took root, and, most important of all, when did my family come to Texas? At that time I knew nothing about either line back of my grandparents. In our family no importance was ever laid on background. We were taught that "every tub should stand on its own bottom." At half-past seventeen, the new bride stood a bit in awe of the elder Sampsons.

Finally, in desperation, I went to Temple and appealed to Daddy and Mamma to tell me all they knew of the history of the Ferguson and Wallace families. Hadn't some of them, any of them, been somebody, *ever*?

Daddy thought this was a grand joke. "You'd better not start looking up ancestors," he warned me. "You might find some of them hanging from trees! When I first announced for governor, I went to East Texas to try to get acquainted. After one of my speeches, a red-headed, rough-looking old fellow came up and shook hands with me and asked: 'Jim, air ye kin to the famous old Bill Ferguson?'"

"My goodness! I thought, if he was famous I certainly wanted to claim kinship with him, so I said: 'Yes, I think he was a distant cousin of mine.'"

" 'Well,' said my newly made friend, 'I'll say this for Old Bill: he sure was a nervy guy. When they hung him for hoss-stealin' he never flinched once.' "

Daddy had his little joke, but I was not dissuaded from looking up my family's ancestors. I copied names and dates out of the family Bible, and quizzed several great-aunts and uncles in Belton. I became really interested, and my research since then has taken me to Washington and New York libraries, and to the British Museum, where I found highly intriguing material. Some of this family history I have used in the beginning of this story of the Fergusons of Texas. I



have come to believe that the tub gets the bottom it stands on from the tree of which it was made.

I found that my family had migrated to Texas some twenty-odd years prior to the Sampsons' arrival, and that I was eligible for membership in the Daughters of the Republic of Texas while the Sampsons were not eligible. I am very much afraid I told them at length about all the ancestors of the Ferguson-Wallace clan, from Charlemagne and "the Campbells-are-coming" Scots "wha hae wi' Wallace bled."

George's Grandmother Sampson was ill when we were married, and did not come to Temple for our wedding. She met Daddy for the first time when he came to Austin on business, and to visit the newlyweds. Every week, since the beginning of *The Ferguson Forum*, she had read Daddy's fiery editorials in "My Little Christian Weekly," as he chose to call his paper. Naturally, she had a very definite picture in her mind of what Daddy was like. As soon as he had gone, she asked me: "Ouida, was that really your father who dined with us this evening?"

I assured her that such had always been my understanding.

"But Ouida," she protested, "he is not at all as I thought he would be. He is so quiet and gentle."

"Daddy is like that all the time with us," I assured her. Always sweet and gentle. He saves his fight and fire for the world."

Granny Sampson never put up the bric-a-brac and stored away the delicate furniture in anticipation of Daddy's visits after that. I am sure she had expected him to stomp up the steps in high-heeled boots, twirling a rope over his head as he yelled, "Hyah, folks!"

On May 3, 1918, Daddy wrote me at great length of the family's activities. In closing he said: "Am very busy with campaign which will bring me back to Austin, so we can be close together again."

Lieutenant Governor William P. Hobby, of Beaumont, had automatically become governor as soon as Daddy was impeached. That summer he opposed Daddy, who was running for another term. A long court battle to keep Daddy's

name off the ticket was based on the wording of the impeachment verdict:

That the said James E. Ferguson be and he is hereby removed from the office of Governor, and be disqualified to hold any office of honor, trust, or profit under the State of Texas.

Daddy based his defense on the fact that, following his pleas to the State Senate for exoneration, and before the final vote was taken, he had filed his resignation with the secretary of state in order to preserve his right to hold office in Texas in the future. This resignation was never recognized. However, Jim Ferguson still had friends on the State Democratic Executive Committee. They certified his name and it was put on the 1918 primary ballot.

The opposition had a slush fund; Hobby was a banker and a newspaper publisher. Daddy's fast-shrinking fortune was about gone. Undaunted by the impeachment and by financial difficulties that would have taken the fight out of a lesser man, he never ceased to do battle. Each week, in the columns of *The Ferguson Forum*, and from every stump in Texas, he flayed Governor Hobby for his official acts. Jim Ferguson was having his innings.

One funny thing I recall as my contribution to Daddy's campaign. It so happened that I had overheard a conversation at a party in Austin. A friend of the Hobbys was tut-tutting on how overworked the poor Governor was. So that he might get some recreation and exercise, she said, he was having a tennis court made where the Fergusons had their cowlot.

Just to fill up my next letter to Daddy I related that tidbit. Much to my surprise, he wrote it up in *The Ferguson Forum* the following week. His facetious ridicule of the overworked Governor evidently alarmed the Hobby advisers. Work was stopped on the tennis court, but the high wire netting fence was completed and several dozen white Leghorn chickens were installed, as though that had been the idea all the time. The plain folks had no objection to a governor's keeping chickens.

The political straws were undoubtedly blowing our way.



A Ferguson victory seemed assured; vindication and exoneration of the Ferguson name were almost certain. But the women were clamoring for the right to vote, and Jim Ferguson had said that suffrage was not his idea of a woman's sphere in life. This was Hobby's trump card and he played it. Without even so much as paying the poll tax which had always been required of men, the women of Texas were allowed to vote by the authority of a bill rushed through the legislature and signed by Governor Hobby before the primaries. The women turned out en masse and cast their votes for Hobby. This political strategy turned victory into defeat for Jim Ferguson.

It was not yet in the cards that we could be close together again, as Daddy had written me in the spring. However, as we said, we still had our health, and in two years we could try again. Our motto was, "Never say 'die,' say 'damn'!"

We had lost our money, and a governor's race, but along with all of America and the world we rejoiced on November 11, 1918. The end of the World War meant the return of loved ones from overseas and the knowledge that no more men would have to go. The world, we thought then, was safe for Democracy. We could concentrate on the battles of peace. Reconstruction days for the Fergusons of Texas lay ahead — six long years.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### Fighting Back

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DADDY was, of course, eager to enter the race for governor in 1920. Since his impeachment (which he had never recognized, since he resigned before the vote was taken), he had lived with but one burning desire — vindication.

Since the 1918 race against W. P. Hobby another political door had been slammed in his face. The members of the State Democratic Executive Committee had changed; Jim Ferguson no longer had enough friends thereon who would vote to put his name on the ticket. A write-in campaign was briefly considered, but was rejected as hopeless.

*Forever barred from holding state office.*

"Well," Daddy said, "I suppose I should sit down and cry my eyes out because my enemies are in the saddle and don't want me in the party. Unfortunately for those who seek to destroy me forever, I am going to fight back with every bit of strength left in me. I have all to gain and nothing to lose. *'He that is down need fear no fall!'* I'll organize my own party and call it the *American Party*."

On August 14, 1919, the indomitable Jim Ferguson organized the American Party. As father of the new party, his name headed the ticket in Texas as candidate for the Presidency of the United States! His good friend, State Senator T. H. McGregor, of Austin, was the party's candidate for governor. Neither of the candidates had the slightest hope of electing Daddy to the Presidency, but they had great fun speaking to the crowds that came out to hear



them! These two men were the antithesis of each other, in both style and oratorical appeal, but were equally possessed of histrionic ability on the platform. McGregor was master of a cultivated literary sarcasm that delighted his audiences, even those who couldn't understand all of it, while Jim Ferguson's wit was of a homely, rough-and-tumble variety that kept his hearers either spellbound or roaring.

There is a fascination in an audience that thrills a speaker who has been bitten by the political bug. The satisfaction obtained from the plaudits of the crowd is greater than monetary reward. Any politician loves to play his harp. Sweet are the uses of oratory!

Money grew scarcer with Daddy each day. Only with the help of small gifts from loyal and devoted friends did he manage to scrape through that campaign. He covered the huge state, accepting invitations to speak at every kind of gathering; county fairs, Confederate Veterans' reunions, Labor Day celebrations and high school graduations kept him busy filling engagements. He often made as many as three set speeches in a day. That is the cardinal rule of politics: *Keep before the public; get around to see the folks.*

On September 1, 1919, Daddy delivered a Labor Day speech at Thurber to the Railroad Brotherhood. In rereading this speech, I note with interest the foresight in his warning to labor. Remember, the Government had taken over administration and control of all railroads during the World War. Jim Ferguson said:

Government control of our big industries can only lead to Dictatorship. There is no place for a labor union in a Dictatorship. . . .

Whenever the laboring classes of this country surrender to the idea of taking a railroad by force, they then surrender to the idea of taking a factory or a coal mine by force. Whenever surrender is made to the idea of taking a factory or a mine by force, then surrender is made to taking a farm or farm products by force. Then comes the downfall of labor and it must surrender to the idea that labor can be taken by force and against its will. Labor is the only property the average laboring man has, and whenever you agree to take one kind of property then you make slaves of yourselves. . . .

The only thing that is left to the laboring man is his labor and his liberty.

Step by step we have seen our liberties taken from us and we wonder what will come next. . . .

Freedom in business gone. Freedom in pleasure gone. Freedom in government gone. Man has begun to resent the unwarranted trespass upon his rights, and from every hill and hamlet, from every shop and shed, from every town and village we can hear the murmuring multitude. . . .

That advice, given more than twenty-five years ago, is just as good today as it was then.

Daddy wrote to me from the ranch in Bosque County on August 19, 1919. His letters were always full of crops, cattle and politics. This particular letter generously covered all these subjects, and went into considerable further detail relative to his oil activities. In closing he said:

"Just be patient, and everything will turn out alright. I expect my grandson to be elected governor on the American Party ticket; so, do not worry, for I want him to have a good disposition."

This was the only reference he ever made to my — as we said at that time — delicate condition. He was far too modest to discuss the question; however, he wrote to me frequently during that period, showing that I was on his mind. He wrote most of these letters in the evening at the ranch, using his old standby, a lead pencil, writing on cheap paper in his elegant, legible calligraphy. They were the outpourings of a heart far from the wiles of the political arena, and they bring to light traits of character in Jim Ferguson not known to any but those closest to him. This ranch retreat served often as a powerhouse to recharge his tired nerve batteries.

In the early days of my pregnancy Mamma wrote to me: "I have to hide all your letters from Dorrace, but I suppose she will have to find out in time."

Dorrace is less than three years my junior; she was sixteen then. That was Mamma's idea, in the days before the stork was the gossip columnists' pet bird.

Thanksgiving in 1919 fell on November 27. It was a day of joy and gratitude in our family, for early that morning the first grandchild was born. My mother was disappointed



beyond words that he was not a girl. The rest of the family rejoiced in true Chinese fashion that I had given birth to a "man child." The gods had smiled on us, and we never ceased to be thankful for our son.

Daddy boarded the first train for Austin. He brought Mamma's blessings and regrets that she could not come. In addition to a scarcity of funds, Mamma was going through a trying period of her life. But penury and lack of wardrobe didn't stop Daddy from coming to see his grandson. I think he would have walked if he had been forced to do so.

When I was operated on in Houston years later, Daddy found urgent business there as soon as he learned I was ill. If he did have business in Houston, it was sadly neglected, for he sat by my bedside until I was on the road to recovery.

Mamma knew cash was scarce, but it was not until one day in 1919, when she asked Daddy for money to run the house, that she realized just how bad things were with the family. Daddy said: "I have no money. If I save your farm I'll be doing well."

That blow was a turning point in Mamma's life. Until that day she had charged things, spent what he gave to her, and left to Jim the worrying over finances. Since that day she has watched both the bills and the cash.

Dorrace lacked one year of finishing at Baylor College. At considerable sacrifice Mamma saw her through the year.

It is said that troubles never come singly. The lengths to which some of the human race will go to kick a man who is down is amazing. In Daddy's prosperous years he had signed a pledge to a Methodist church in Dallas to contribute a goodly sum toward the erection of a memorial window to his father, Parson Ferguson. This pledge was conditional: his brothers and sisters were to give a like amount. Our crash came, and Daddy could not pay his pledge. The good Christians in the church transferred the note to an individual who, in turn, sued Daddy for his church pledge, and was awarded a judgment. Daddy was unable to pay it. Full of brotherly love, this individual sent an officer to attach Mamma's old twin-six Packard car, one of the few comforts left from her more prosperous days.

Mamma told them they could take it with them, but that

they would only have to bring it back. Of course they knew that under Texas law they could not levy on a personal conveyance, but the show that the officer made before the neighbors in taking the car did somebody's soul much good . . . of that I am sure! They expected to shame Mamma into paying off the judgment. She couldn't pay.

George Nalle, my husband, was working for his father at that time at the lumber yard; he had only his salary to live on. By the time our son was eleven months old the Ferguson and Nalle exchequers were so low that I resolved to try to make some money. I considered many things, but all required capital. My hands and wits were my only assets. In a bridge game one day I chanced to say to Ruth Yett, "I must find a way to make some money."

Ruth had worked in an insurance office. She said she would do the office work if I would get the business; with my overabundance of the "gift of gab" that would be dead easy. It was a deal. Thanks to the kindness of our many friends, our insurance business was a success from the beginning.

Oblivion is the specter most dreaded by every man in public life. While the American Party elected no one to public office, it gave Daddy the opportunity to cover the state and thereby keep "Fergusonism" alive in the public mind. It also kept the enemy considerably worried over what "Farmer Jim" was going to pull out of his hat next.

The party polled 60,000 votes in the November 1920 general election. This came to be known as, "The Ferguson vestpocket vote in Texas," but it was a loyal tribute that deeply touched the heart of every member of the Ferguson clan.

Daddy's exoneration came to occupy almost our every waking hour. We were determined that nothing, not even poverty, could deter us from righting the wrong done him. Since the day that impeachment vote was taken in the Senate, he had dedicated his life and work to the clearing of his record.

The American Party had accomplished the purpose for which it was formed, so why worry? After all, Jim Ferguson



was still young — not yet fifty — and vigorous. In two more years there would be another chance to try again. In the meantime he must stay on the road; if his cause was to be kept alive he must make at least one or two speeches a week until the 1922 campaign opened.

Daddy was badly in need of a new traveling bag. The one he had carried on all of his previous campaigns was battle-scarred, ready to give up the ghost. On his birthday I sent him a new bag, and received this letter of thanks:

August 31, 1921

MY DEAR DARLING DAUGHTER:

As you would say it was sweet of you to remember me on my 50th birthday with the very fine and valuable grip. I will use it often.

While I am 50 today, I have no desire to live to be 100, and yet I am intensely desirous of living to be 75.

Though I have made many mistakes, yet looking back on a life at least full of events, I have no serious regrets. Though I have suffered some losses yet I have many things to be thankful for.

To enumerate, I have a most faithful and devoted wife ever loyal and true. Then I have two smart daughters, one married happily and honored and the other equally happy and satisfied single.

Every person looking back over a life of 50 years can find many things that at least are interesting to them whether so to others or not.

Unavoidably it seemed at the time, I have had to make enemies. While I wish it had been otherwise yet I am consoled by the fact that many great men have had to do the same thing, and therefore why should I pine over the impossible in life.

On the other hand I am gratified beyond measure over the loyalty of thousands of real true friends I have. No man ever had better friends than your Daddy. I want my family in the years to come to find comfort in the fact that for every unkind and untrue thing that has been said of me there has always been and always will be hundreds of friends to deny the charge and defend my name.

I have been for something or against something all my

life and nobody has ever yet charged me with being a straddler. I would rather be wrong over half the time than to live a life and never be right or wrong any of the time.

At 50 I find my finances much impaired and yet I am not wholly discouraged and again I am consoled by the experience of others. Jay Gould went broke before he was 50 and made the great bulk of his fortune after he was 50. Vanderbilt made his great riches after he was 50.

I am really richer than I have ever been because I no longer worship money as in my younger days. I hope my children will never make the mistake of judging real worth by an inventory standard.

Pardon these musings of a 50 year old man.

Remember me kindly to George and the rest of the family and especially tell my wonderful grandson that granddaddy thought of him on his 50th birthday and for him indulged the hope of a long and interesting life.

With much love to your good self and again thanking you for remembering me, I am

Your loving

"DADDY"

That letter, when times were so tight for him, bespoke the religion and fine spirit of the man. He never once pitied himself or cursed God for his plight. Enumerating his benisons, he looked to the future for better times. I spent hours by myself with this letter. I would read it and reread it and soak it in tears. To this good day when I read it I cannot keep the tears back.

In those years of the locust, Jim Ferguson's loyal friends were seeing him from town to town. Some would take him to his next speaking date while others gave him cash for expenses. It was indeed a hand-to-mouth existence and had it not been for the loving kindness of the best friends in the world, I know, he could not have kept going. When he would kiss Mamma good-bye and leave home, he knew and she knew that he did not have sufficient funds to return, but, with no fear that the Lord would not return him to her, she would bid him godspeed, and he would set out. That went on for two years.

One day he arrived in Austin dressed in a suit darned



with loving fingers and carrying the shiny new traveling bag that I had sent him. It was no shinier than his suit. He told us he was to speak in New Braunfels, just fifty miles away, on the following day. He confided to me: "I have money to get to New Braunfels, but no farther."

I gave him a check for a small amount, but asked him not to cash it until he reached New Braunfels. I did not have sufficient funds in the bank to cover it next day, but by the time the check cleared, I could make some insurance collections; if I failed in doing that, I could ask George for the money.

Two days later I received a note from Daddy. Thanks to the kindness of some good friend in New Braunfels he was able to return my check and still have enough to make his next speaking dates. This worried me no little; I was afraid he had returned my check when he really needed it, because he didn't want to take my last cent. That would have been like Daddy.

Nineteen hundred and twenty-two loomed upon the horizon and shed a light of great political hope on Jim Ferguson; the six-year-interval election of a United States Senator. He had been barred only from holding State office, and as this was a Federal office, his enemies could not keep his name off the Democratic ticket.

But Mamma protested. For many reasons she did not want to go to Washington. The high cost of living there and its cold weather in winter were her main arguments against his trying for the office. Daddy agreed that as a true Texas horned frog he did not relish the idea of facing Washington's winter climate. However, as this seemed the only avenue of vindication open to him at the time, he felt that he could not pass it up. Always eager to help her Jim, Mamma was easily convinced that this was the thing to do.

The field was brilliant that year with such stars as the incumbent Charles A. Culberson, who had held the senatorial seat with honor for more than twenty years; Robert Lee Henry, who had been in Congress for many years; and, as added starters, the brilliant Clarence Owsley, and Earle Mayfield, lawyer, legislator and former State Railroad Commissioner.

In past races many strong and able men had fallen in defeat before the mighty Culberson. Although he was now full of years, his political strength in Texas was considered invincible. Daddy went into the battle fully cognizant of that. In the beginning, all candidates picked Culberson as the man they had to beat.

The Ku Klux Klan was just beginning to rear its ugly head and start its reign of terror and intolerance in Texas. Appealing to racial and religious prejudice, in secret and under cover, the Klan was building an organization whose political strength was as yet an unknown quantity but was beginning to be feared.

Some of the senatorial candidates got cold feet and began warming up to the Klan. Each of several aspirants believed he was the real choice of the Klan, but the Klan was also playing politics with the candidates. In more than half the counties in the state it had controlled the local elections. The story of that grisly reign of terror, floggings, murders, tarring and feathering and intimidation cannot be told here. There will be no voice raised in protest today when I call that the blackest chapter in Texas history.

From every stump in Texas, Jim Ferguson, alone from the first, courageously attacked the Ku Klux Klan, declaring: "There is no place for a secret government with swamp courts in a democracy."

Disregarding the threats of mayhem and murder in anonymous letters, Daddy continued to hammer at the Ku Klux. His story of the death of Otto Lange was one of his most dramatic:

"Under cover of darkness masked and robed night riders charged up to the door of the Lange farm in Burleson County. Otto Lange opened the door of his humble home. The mob seized Lange and dragged him into his front yard. As they were proceeding to take him to a waiting automobile, his faithful wife and gray-haired mother, together with his two daughters, succeeded in freeing him from the mob. Thwarted in their evil purpose, one of the mob shot Otto Lange through the breast. The shot pierced the hand of one of his daughters. As he lay dying, he bid his family good-bye while the Ku Kluxers rode away.



"My friends," Jim Ferguson would shout, "Otto Lange was a respected German citizen. His only crime was that he was of foreign birth."

That was only one of the weapons against the sheeted riders of the fiery cross. Again Farmer Jim Ferguson poured it on — "The tar of truth and the feathers of the fallen eagles of our freedom."

No one ever dared lay a hand on him, but in Houston, at the huge city auditorium, several hundred Klansmen filed into the hall and took their seats before his speech started. At a signal from the leader, they began to shuffle their feet, rose and started to march out, causing extreme confusion.

The master of ceremonies called for order in vain. In the name of decency and fair play, Jim Ferguson appealed to the city and county officials present to quiet the disturbance. When they made no move, caustically he accused them of having Klan sympathies. Over the din he continued to strive to make himself heard.

Afterwards he said, "I knew if I sat down until they finished filing out, I would lose my entire crowd."

On numerous occasions thereafter the Ku Kluxers used the walkout plan, attempting to break up Ferguson meetings. Like a new football play, the scheme had come near working in Houston, but when it was used in other places, the audiences were on to the trick and would sit quietly until order was restored.

That campaign became almost a religious war. The hooded night riders so terrorized the Jews in some parts of the state that for a time during the campaign they gathered together and sat up all night fearing a pogrom. Their businesses were boycotted as were those of all foreigners.

One evening as George and I came out of the Paramount theater in Austin we saw two men, tarred and feathered, running up Congress Avenue, the main street, a howling mob at their heels. The Ku Kluxers had released the men at the river, told them to go as fast as they could to a newspaper office, report what had happened to them, and then leave town. That was child's play compared to what was done elsewhere.

Texans always take their politics seriously but this

time it went deeper; there was not a spark of humor in that grim campaign. There was no such thing as being neutral. Even the professional fence-straddler was smoked out and compelled to choose his side. You were anti-Klan or else you talked about white supremacy, etc. I have often been reminded of that campaign, reading the bombast of some of the saviors of the people in Europe.

It was a rapidly changing campaign. Charlie Culber-son, target of every other candidate's attack in the beginning, was soon lost sight of as the fight narrowed down to the two issues: Ku-Kluxism and Fergusonism. From every husting in Texas Jim Ferguson poured his vitriol on "swamp courts" and gangland rule, and pleaded for vindication from the impeachment his enemies had put upon him. In the name of his children and grandchildren he begged that the unjust stigma be removed from his name by electing him to the United States Senate.

Foreign and national affairs were forgotten while all candidates pounded their audiences, pro and con, with these issues: Would the Ku Klux Klan seat a Senator? Would Jim Ferguson be vindicated?

Jim Ferguson ran second in the first primary in July, but was defeated in the August run-off between the two leading candidates. A run-off is held if no single candidate polls a clear majority over all others combined. Earle Mayfield, the choice of the Ku Klux Klan, was swept into office by pro-Klan and anti-Ferguson votes.

Ora Mayfield, the new Senator's wife, and my mother had been devoted friends during the first Ferguson administration, when her husband was Railroad Commissioner. When Mrs. Mayfield, a fine and beautiful character, passed through Temple on her way back to her old home to cast her vote, she called Mamma on the telephone. In the midst of one of the bitterest political campaigns in American history the wives of the two leading candidates enjoyed a pleasant visit on the telephone. Mamma was deeply touched by this. "Now wasn't that typical of Ora?" she said. "She is far too big to let issues interfere with our friendship."

The political apple cart in Texas had suffered a tremendous upset in the Mayfield-Ferguson campaign. Al-



though Jim Ferguson was not elected to the United States Senate, in many respect his defeat was a victory. Our cause had gained much ground, and this was the nearest we had come to winning an election since the stigma of impeachment had been set upon us. Single-handed, and practically without campaign funds, Daddy had polled more votes than the mighty statesman, Senator Culberson, who had held the seat of honor for more than two decades. There were other able men in that race who received far fewer votes than did Jim Ferguson. Many fair-minded people had been brought back into our camp. It was plain that much of the old hatred against Ferguson had abated. In this we took particular comfort.

All of these advantages Daddy recounted to us, his family. After each victory or defeat it was his practice to hold a family caucus. Dorrace and I knew that after a victory he would be adamant and severe as he handed down instructions to us on how to conduct ourselves for the next two years. If it was after defeat, we knew he would be cheerful, and turn the conference into a pep rally. Never one time did we hear Daddy complain to the Almighty, or curse his bad luck. After each one of his long line of defeats, he would close the caucus with an admonition:

"I am positive victory will come some day. However, if it never comes, I want my children to know to always be humble and grateful for this: no man in public life ever had more loyal friends than your father."

In two more years we would have a chance at the governor's office; in the meantime, we could work through the courts to gain a place on the Democratic ticket. We had retrieved many friends who would help us, and, on the whole, we considered we were in fine political feather, come 1924.

When 1923 brought another legislature to Austin, State Senators Joe Burkett, of Eastland; I. D. Fairchild, of Lufkin; Archie Parr, of San Diego; Clark, of Fayette, and I plotted a quick trick to expunge the impeachment proceedings from the Senate records. These friends considered that my presence in the gallery at the time the question came up would have a good moral effect on some of our lukewarm

friends. For days I held myself ready to go to the Senate gallery.

On February 9, Senator Burkett called me on the telephone. He said: "The Lieutenant Governor has just asked Senator Parr to take the Chair. Hurry! The fireworks are about to begin!"

I saw Senator Parr, standing on the Lieutenant Governor's dais, scan the gallery as I took my seat on the front row. As soon as he located me, he recognized Senator Burkett, who was on his feet.

Senator Burkett offered Senate Resolution No. 57, which expunged from the Senate Records the account of James E. Ferguson's impeachment and restored the right of the said Ferguson to hold office in the state of Texas. A *viva voce* vote was taken. Senator Parr declared that the ayes had it. A shout of protest went up from the opposition.

Senator Fairchild moved to reconsider and table the motion. The motion prevailed.

Again gaining recognition, Senator Fairchild moved to adjourn. The motion prevailed.

The Senate had adjourned, and that was all there was to it, as far as we were concerned. Planned long ahead, perfectly timed, everything had clicked.

But that wasn't to be all. Uproar soon reigned on the floor of the Senate. The Lieutenant Governor, who was somewhere in the Capitol, was called. He reconvened the Senate. After some thirty minutes of wrangling, Senator Bailey moved to expunge from the records all proceedings that had occurred from the time the Lieutenant Governor left the chair until he returned to it. The motion was adopted, and we found ourselves exactly where we had started.

Some of our friends, however, saw in the fiasco the hope of a court contest to establish the validity of Senate Resolution No. 57.

The Fort Worth *Star-Telegram* next day carried, in bold type, across its front page: "FERGUSON CITIZEN FOR 30 MINUTES!"



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## CHAPTER XVII

### **Enter Madame!**

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WE WENT TO COURT in an attempt to get James E. Ferguson's name on the ballot for governor. It was mid-afternoon when I received the news of the court decision that Daddy's name would not be allowed to go on the Democratic ticket. When I heard the bad news I felt that I must get to him as quickly as possible. Although we had not expected the court to decide in our favor, there had been a faint ray of hope — gone now. Frankly, I feared how he might react to having this last legal door slammed in his face. He was a tired warrior.

It was one of those extremely warm days that we so often have in the early spring in Texas. I knew he was to speak in Taylor that afternoon. My car burned up those thirty-odd miles between Austin and Taylor, but he had finished his speech when I arrived. I found him in a hotel room, sitting on the side of the bed quietly changing cuff buttons from the perspiration-soaked shirt to a dry one. In an excited state, I burst in, snatched shirt and buttons out of his hands and, fumbling nervously, tried to finish the chore for him. He looked up at me and asked, quietly:

"How is my grandson?"

My reply was: "Of course you have heard of the court decision. What are we going to do next?"

"Why, Mamma can run in my place. There is nothing to prevent her from being governor. She has already filed for a place on the ticket," Daddy said.

I shall never forget how quietly he told me the news. I couldn't believe my ears! I think I dropped the shirt. How fantastic and utterly impossible all this seemed!

A knock at the door. Daddy said, "Come."

In walked a newspaper reporter, slightly pop-eyed with amazement. He could see a headline: JIM FERGUSON FOUND WITHOUT SHIRT, SEATED ON BED IN HOTEL BESIDE STRANGE WOMAN!

"What's your name, son?" Daddy asked him. "This is my daughter Ouida, Mrs. Nalle."

The reporter's countenance dropped. No story! Other newspaper men, following him in, knew me and greeted me. They all wanted to know: "What is this about Mrs. Ferguson running for governor?"

Daddy made a short statement, in which he paid tribute to Mamma; indeed, with flowery encomiums he placed the corona of the Lone Star State upon her head. From that moment the footlights were turned on the new leading lady, and the old showman smiled upon her from the prompter's box.

When the last reporter had gone, I said: "Well, you made a very graceful abdication in your undershirt! I wish I felt as confident of her victory as you seem to be."

Daddy laughed. "Well, it's going to be a hard fight, but I believe we can win." Calmly. Still calmly! I could scarcely stay in my shoes! Mamma pitched into that campaign with a pep and fury no one suspected she had in her. She was forty-nine in June 1924. Physically, she had been delicate most of her life and had loved comfort. We marveled at her strength and endurance as she traveled over the length and breadth of vast Texas, making speeches. Do you know how big Texas is? About 1100 miles from north to south, and the same from east to west.

Some days when she was extremely tired she would say with a sigh: "But the back is equal to the burden." Inspired and stimulated by the two great causes for which she was fighting, she refused to flag. Vindication for her Jim and complete annihilation of the Ku Klux Klan were the burning issues; either would have kept her fighting until she dropped.



The Ku Klux Klan's candidate for governor was Felix D. Robertson of Dallas, a lawyer.

Again from every stump in Texas the Fergusons made passionate appeals to the fair-minded to help them tear the mask from the hooded riders who were still running rampant over the state, committing horrible crimes. Now there were two fighting Fergusons in the field.

Daddy told his listeners: "If you will elect my good wife governor we will take the courts out of the swamps and put them back in the courthouse where they should be."

During most of the first part of that campaign they traveled together. Mamma would speak first, and in her own way ask the mothers, sisters and wives of Texas to help her clear her family's name. That was her trump card, and she played it with finesse. Had she been a militant suffragist all her life her appeal would not have had half the force it had coming from a quiet, home-loving wife, mother and grandmother. In the name of her children and her grandson, not in her own, she would plead and would end with: "A vote for me is a vote of confidence for my husband, who cannot be a candidate because his enemies have succeeded in barring him from holding public office."

This entreaty of a gentle woman was becoming a problem to the professional politicians; they didn't know how to meet the attack, so simple and unprecedented. It had never occurred before in American politics; it may never occur again.

The Reverend R. Cary Montague wrote of Miriam A. Ferguson in his *Southern Churchman*: "A Modern Deborah. Deborah judged Israel. . . . She freed her people from the power of the oppressor and established peace."

All over Texas, the opposition roared that Jim Ferguson would be the real governor and without responsibility for his official acts. What could have been easier to answer than that charge?

When Miriam Amanda had finished her modest speech she would introduce Jim, who would smite his enemies hip and thigh with the old Ferguson fury. He would strip the mask from the Klan and finally, repeating the charge that he

would be the real governor, he would fall back on common sense:

"Do you suppose for one moment that I would do anything that would bring dishonor upon my good wife, who has so valiantly stood by me in all of my trouble? Certainly, I'll give her the best advice that I possibly can and I feel sure that she will ask my advice on many questions. I ask you, if your wife was governor, would you get mad and leave home or would you stick around and help her?"

After pointing out the accomplishments of his own administration, he would then show wherein his wife would have the benefit of his experience, and would end with what was to become a slogan:

*"In short, the people of Texas will have two governors for the price of one!"*

And then he would go back to the Klan, the Klan's "Klandidate" (as he called Robertson). Jim Ferguson had never before been so inspired on the stump. The Fergusons drew amazing crowds and Jim amazed those crowds.

Dorrace, now of voting age, stayed home and worked in the campaign headquarters as financial manager. The business course she had taken at Baylor saved the war chest one salary.

My son, then nearly four, appeared on the platform with Mamma on numerous occasions. Even though he didn't understand what all the shouting was for, he enjoyed it. After all, he is half Ferguson and all Texan!

Every time the Fergusons spoke within eighty miles of Austin, George and I took them in our car to the speaking date. A penny saved was a penny needed. On one day they were to speak in San Marcos in the afternoon and in New Braunfels in the evening. Those important towns are south of Austin, twenty miles apart. It was a sizzling hot June afternoon when we arrived in San Marcos for the first speech, and suppertime when we reached New Braunfels. Things went smoothly through both speeches. It was after ten o'clock when we bade our friends in New Braunfels good-bye and started for Austin, where Mamma and Daddy were to board the midnight train for a speaking date in North Texas. We had two hours in which to go fifty miles over a good highway.



About five miles out of New Braunfels a tire went flat. It was annoying to be delayed, but there was still plenty of time to make the train. We started on, and a tire blew out! Patient, unruffled, my husband changed the second tire. No one came along the road, and the hush of the late hour seemed to envelop the entire countryside. Daddy fumed, trying to help George; but if there was anything in the world Daddy was completely ignorant of, it was automobile repairs. He only knew where to put gasoline, oil and water. That was all.

Clad in a thin summer dress, Mamma huddled in one corner of the back seat, holding my sleeping child; the poisonous night air added discomfort to her worry over that important speaking date upstate next day.

As we started away from our second struggle with a tire, about fifteen miles out of Austin, we heard the whistle of a train. Our hearts went to our toes! That was the express train from San Antonio that the Fergusons were to take at midnight! George said that maybe he could still make it. For once in his life Daddy consented to fast driving.

Before we got up to sixty an hour, "bang" went the second blowout; George wrestled the car back into the road. One puncture and two blowouts were one too many. Without another spare we would be compelled to limp in on the rim. We accepted the loss of the race. Daddy praised George warmly and marveled that he had not lost his temper. George, of course, regretted not being able to get them to Austin on time but Daddy said:

"Don't worry, George; things just happen that way sometimes. Every speaker misses a date occasionally."

Slowly the rim clanked off the miles. We settled down to pleasant conversation and a full discussion of future plans for the campaign.

Just short of Austin we heard a locomotive whistle — it seemed that trains as well as automobiles could get out of order. Thanks to a "hotbox," the train was delayed an hour and a half. Arriving in Austin at 1:10 A. M., we waited twenty minutes at the station for that midnight train. Ferguson luck had turned. Perhaps an omen?

The exposure, plus the nervous ordeal, brought upon

our candidate one of the worst attacks of hay fever she had ever suffered. When she greeted the press representatives the following morning in Dallas with a red nose and tears in her eyes, they gave the hay fever a big play, whereupon Mamma was deluged with letters telling of remedies and giving all kinds of advice as to how to cure the ailment. She thought she got the entire hay fever vote, which is nothing to sneeze at.

During the campaign Mamma would return to her home in Temple for periodical rests while Daddy was speaking almost continuously in her behalf. On one occasion I went to Temple for a visit with her during her retreat.

After dinner one evening, as we sat together in the library, a rain of rocks began descending upon the roof. I jumped up. "What under the sun?"

Not the least bit ruffled, Mamma replied: "That is the only answer the Ku Kluxers can give to my attacks upon their lawlessness. It seems sort of feeble, don't you think?"

July 26, primary day, finally came. I won't say we were anxious; we Nalles, I know, were excited beyond measure. Nobody in Texas knew how it was going to come out: there was no precedent for this campaign.

There were nine Democratic candidates for governor in that first primary race! Unless one received more than fifty per cent of the total vote cast, there would have to be a run-off between the top two thirty days later.

There were several candidates to split the anti-Klan vote, and that was discouraging. The odds at least were not on the Klan candidate, Robertson, to win on the first ballot by getting a clean majority.

Returns from many counties were incomplete, according to the election bureau in Dallas, but there was no doubt that Felix Robertson ran far ahead of the field with his solid Klan vote.

Whether Mrs. Ferguson, or Lieutenant Governor Lynch Davidson, of Houston, would finish second and get to run it off in August with Robertson for the Democratic nomination was not known for several days. Returns were "not complete" from many counties.

Daddy did not eat or sleep. It was obvious to him that



somebody was holding out on us: Klan skulduggery in the county election boards. Grimly he said to Mamma:

"We have worked too many years and too hard for this victory to have it taken away from us at this late date. If the Dallas Election Bureau can't find out how the counties voted, I can. It will cost some money to send a telegram to a key Ferguson supporter in each of the 254 counties in Texas, but our friends will help us."

A personal telegram went to a Ferguson man in each county, requesting that the exact vote in the governor's race be ascertained from the county authorities and the result telegraphed to us immediately. The next morning Daddy boarded the train for Dallas, fortified with 254 telegrams. It was amazing how quickly the bureau heard from the incomplete counties after that.

The final figures never did include official returns from Hockley and Jim Hogg counties, but their total votes did not add up to 600 and could not affect the result. The *Texas Almanac* for 1925, published by The Dallas News, gave these as the returns of the July primary:

Felix D. Robertson	193,508
Mrs. Miriam A. Ferguson	146,424
Lynch Davidson	141,208
T. W. Davidson	125,011
Thomas D. Barton	29,217
V. A. Collins	24,864
Joe Burkett	21,720
W. E. Pope	17,136
George W. Dixon	4,035
	<hr/>
	703,123

There would also have to be a run-off in the races for lieutenant governor, attorney general, railroad commissioner (two), chief justice of the supreme court and comptroller, but that wasn't interesting the Ferguson family at the moment.

Miriam Amanda Ferguson led the anti-Robertson, anti-Klan field! She was in the run-off, by a margin of 5,216 votes over the veteran politician and Lieutenant Governor,

Lynch Davidson. The Fergusons — well, put yourselves in our places!

Could it possibly be true that the end for which we had worked and prayed seven long years was now in sight? If only most of the vote for the seven other candidates would now turn out for Mamma and against the Klan candidate, she was in!

“You pinch me,” Dorrace said, “and I’ll pinch you. We’re asleep and just dreaming. Who would ever have thought that vindication for Daddy would come this way? And who would have ever thought that our mother might be the first woman governor in the United States?”

But we had no time to dream. There was a final heat to run before the race was over. The vote had to be got out August 23.

Next morning early we were awakened by the ringing of the telephone, followed by the ringing of the doorbell. Reporters and more reporters; telegrams, long distance calls from papers as far away as New York. Every few minutes a taxi would deliver another eager news gatherer at our door.

What was this woman Miriam Amanda Ferguson like? A new slant on her character and life was the goal of each and every reporter. Color. Atmosphere. “Good quotes.” Jealously they watched each other with one eye while they scrutinized the candidate and her home with the other. And she was such a simple woman. What did she think of this and that and why? They didn’t ask her views on the Dionne quintuplets, I know, because the quints had not been born by ten years.

Mamma rather resented this wholesale attack on her private life. She had planned to make peach preserves that day. Some of the reporters were not entirely kind in putting their numerous questions to her and some hardly tactful. Mamma is not too meek. It was soon easy to tell who represented friendly papers, and who came for no good purpose. In fact, she told them what was what, with her usual bluntness.

In politics it is a wise policy to handle the enemy newspapers with gloves, to be just a little extra polite to them, and to make them feel that they are welcome and that they



are going to get the same breaks in news as are the friendly papers. Newspaper reporters are human and touchy; a soft answer turneth away their wrath — and some can even be flattered. But we could never get Mamma to play the game that way. She would separate the “goats from the sheep” as she called them, and treat them according to their just deserts.

Mamma was hardly civil to the representatives of the enemy papers, though it was amusing to see her mother instinct crop out when some cub reporter from the opposition approached her. To the frightened kid she would be sweet, kind and helpful, despite his belonging among the “goats.” Before he got away from her she would scold and lecture him on the unfair policy of his paper, as if the youngster could have done anything about that!

Mamma always had an austere dignity that was hard to penetrate. Daddy and I were the easily approached rough-necks of our family. We had a time with our candidate for governor on this first morning of the run-off race. Daddy had not yet returned from Dallas. Newspaper folk not only wanted interviews; they also wanted pictures, unusual photographs in particular.

Yes, Mamma would be glad to pose sitting in the swing on the front gallery. But these fellows wanted human interest shots. By this time they were more than a little in awe of this first woman candidate for governor, who was now for the first time likely to be governor of Texas. She would be national news.

I told them I would do all I could to help them, but that we must work on her *easy*. We did, and she consented to let them go to the kitchen and photograph her peeling peaches. That is the picture she resented most; it was the picture most widely used, not only in this country but also in Europe. The cutline with it called her “Ma” Ferguson. Her initials are M. A., and if you add her maiden name, it becomes “MAW.” That name offended her sense of dignity throughout the years. It will be noticed that I have not called her “Ma” in this story. I know better.

Soon stickers bearing the slogan “ME FOR MA” began to appear on automobiles all over the state. Some added:

*"And I ain't got a dern thing against Pa."* "Ma" Ferguson fit into headlines for which "Mrs." Ferguson was one letter too long.

"Ma Ferguson" she was, and "Ma Ferguson" she will remain to half of Texas and much of the nation.

After the pictures with the peaches were taken, the rest was dead easy. Would she go to her farm — eleven miles south of Temple — and pose in front of her birthplace? She refused at first: she had to put up those peaches! But the political efficacy of this was too good to let slip out of her fingers; consequently, we urged her.

Once on the farm, there would be many interesting shots. "Ma Ferguson" feeding the chickens, the true helpmate of "Farmer Jim." What better political appeal could we want? Our friend, Harry Fisher, of Houston, plotted pictures with me driving Mamma down to the old Wallace farm.

We needed a sunbonnet. One of the women on the farm lent Mamma a bonnet, apologizing that she had been visiting, and that all her bonnets were dirty. We didn't mind that, but Mamma did. After turning it wrong side out, we persuaded her to put it on.

From these pictures came the bright idea of using as her campaign song: *"Put on Your Old Gray Bonnet with the Blue Ribbon on It."* It greeted her everywhere she spoke, and I think she was sick and tired of it by election day.

I have a good chuckle every time I peruse the family scrapbook, and see one clipping from the *New York Times*: the picture of Mamma in the sunbonnet, wrong side out.

"Yes," Mamma always says, "mules, chickens, cows, pigs and a sunbonnet! You and Harry Fisher certainly made me make a fool out of myself that day."

"We did it for your own good," I tell her, just as she used to tell me when she punished me.

We had thirty days before the run-off primary to get out the anti-Klan vote. The big fight was on. Texas was just as vast as ever, and Daddy realized that to win he must "shake every bush in the state."

Mamma and Daddy no longer campaigned together. As a speaker, the lady, as we say in Texas, had "won her spurs,"



and could now fill her own dates without Daddy's hovering over her apprehensively.

In retrospect, I realize that Mamma, from the beginning of the campaign, had seemed to be perfectly sure of herself. If she was ever nervous, it never showed on the surface. It was Daddy who was jittery when she started speaking. In the early days of that campaign, we dared not speak to him just prior to Mamma's platform appearance; he would bite our heads off. His nervousness on her behalf turned Daddy into a bear.

I lamented to George that Daddy no longer had the sweet angelic disposition he'd had before Mamma took the stump. George defended him most angrily. "Ouida, you don't realize his responsibility! Your father is making history by proxy and the nerve strain is tremendous. Just think what he has done! Your mother had never made a public speech before she announced for governor."

"Well," I said, "she's doing all right now."

"*Nothing succeeds like success.*" I am sure that old saying was first said of politics. Campaign donations rolled in like a gulf tide as soon as it was certain that Mamma was to be in the run-off with Felix Robertson. Nothing was too good for "Our candidate" now, and the local committee saw to it that she lived in fitting style. It was like an Alger story, "*Rags to Riches.*" Mamma and Daddy no longer had to travel together to save hotel bills. Thanks to the need for conferences on the way, they moved from chair cars to drawing rooms, and from cheap hotels to suites. Mamma had never been one to complain of too much comfort, and the campaign was no bed of roses at best.

Some member of the family, or a friend, traveled with her, now that she and Daddy were thrashing the bushes in different parts of the state. The job was no easy one; it combined the duties of secretary, diplomat, and nurse. To keep the clamoring crowd away while the candidate rested took untold tact. Her right arm swelled to twice its normal size because of the handshaking she had to do. Keeping that arm in warm Epsom salt packs every moment she was out of the public eye was a job in itself. She tried carrying the arm in a sling, but when eager supporters rushed up and held out

their hands it would embarrass them and Mamma, too, when she could not respond with a warm handclasp. It is not in my mother's nature to deceive anyone; she had literally never bothered herself to make a good impression or please "the right people." She kissed no babies in that campaign, nor did she flatter or soft-soap anybody; yet I believe the net result was to get votes for her. Here was a "tub that stood on its bottom," and the Texans could sense this when she spoke. The lady wore no man's collar, not even Jim's!

Nevertheless, something had to be done to spare that right hand. I found that I could stand close behind Mamma and put my left hand on her shoulder, and at the same time thrust my right arm through under her right elbow and do the handshaking for her. The friends beaming into her face rarely ever looked down to discover that it was my hand they were shaking and not the candidate's. When someone did, I explained, and got a laugh and sympathy for Mamma.

Texans pride themselves on pioneering, on being biggest and first. The chance to be the first state to elect a woman governor brought crowds out in every town and won us many a vote.

The state of Wyoming slipped in on Texas and inaugurated Nellie Tayloe Ross governor of Wyoming before Mamma took her oath of office, but to Texas goes the record of being the first state to elect a woman governor.

The Ku Klux issue alone in that campaign rent asunder the state. Families were estranged, and friends of a lifetime ceased to speak, so bitter was the fight. The feud against the Fergusons was forgotten by those who hated Ku Kluxism more. The Klan supporters, of course, made "Fergusonism" the issue and banged the big drum for "One hundred per cent Americanism and White supremacy!" It is difficult to convey to anyone who did not go through it the frightening intensity of those days — and nights!

There was almost no humor in that campaign, but I do remember one hearty laugh. From the Red River to the Rio Grande, the Fergusons had been introduced in devious ways and at tortuous length. I often heard Daddy mutter after a long introduction: "God preserve me from my friends; I can



take care of my enemies. Why did that fellow try to make my speech for me?"

There was one stunning and witty exception. Daddy was to speak at Yoakum and Will Bagby, of Hallettsville, was asked to make the introduction. Resigned to the usual long overture, Daddy settled down to take his punishment. Bagby arose, waited for silence, and roared out:

*"All you owls hunt your holes! The Eagle is here!"* He turned, waved Jim Ferguson to his feet, and sat down!

The tension of the run-off primary day was almost unbearable. Every peace officer in Texas was on the alert for trouble — on the alert for, or against the Ku Klux Klan. There was no rioting, no bloodshed. This time there was no unnecessary delay in getting the count: the whole nation was watching Texas. The vote was: Miriam A. Ferguson, 413,751; Felix D. Robertson, 316,019 — a majority of 97,732.

The goal toward which we had striven since that terrible impeachment ordeal in 1917 had at last been reached!

Could it possibly be true, we asked ourselves, that our quiet, home-loving mother had been elected governor of Texas, a domain greater than the one that George Washington was called to rule over in 1789?

After receiving a Democratic Party nomination, candidates in Texas usually take a vacation, with no worry as to the outcome of the November general election.

Not so with the Fergusons: theirs was always the hard way. Our opposition was badly crippled, but it was not dead.

Dr. George C. Butte, a professor at the University of Texas, was hurried home from Europe, where he was vacationing, and his name was placed on the Republican ticket by the G.O.P. State Convention. He was to rally the pro-Klan and anti-Ferguson vote that was expected to bolt the party. This fact continued our struggle to the election on November 4, but compared with the storm over the Democratic nomination this was a summer zephyr.

The governor of Texas must solemnly swear in his oath of office that he has never fought a duel with deadly weapons; that dates from 1845 when the state was admitted to the Union.

Dr. Butte had been educated at Heidelberg. Mamma

asked him to tell the people of Texas whether or not he had been a corps student while at Heidelberg. (The corps students are those who belong to a corps or club whose members must fight duels. The deeper the saber scars on the face of a corps student the greater the "honor.") Dr. Butte never answered this. It was asked only to heckle him.

Dr. Butte did not receive the entire Klan vote in November. Many fair-minded people had been awakened to what the Ku Klux Klan really was, and there were wholesale defections from its ranks. Frequently, the American people are led off in the wrong direction, but as Lincoln said, "You can't fool all of the people. . . ." In November the people spoke again, and again said that they wanted to make Miriam A. Ferguson the first woman governor of Texas. The vote was: Ferguson, 422,059; Butte, 298,046 — total, 720,105. The G. O. P. in the 1922 election had polled 73,329, so you may draw your own conclusions.

Mamma's foreign mail was now heavy. Every post brought letters stuffed with clippings from foreign papers on the woman governor-elect of the he-man state of Texas. One letter, from Rome, addressed to M. A. Ferguson, U. S. A., reached her without delay. In all of the foreign news stories the editors' reactions to a woman in politics were about the same. They hailed her as a victorious crusader and manifested interest in the great experiment. That, remember, was in 1924, when women were considered human beings, even in Italy and Germany.



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## CHAPTER XVIII

# The Woman Governor

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INAUGURATION DAY, January 20, 1925, dawned in a flood of Texas sunshine. The Austin noon temperature was fifty degrees. A fine, crisp winter day for Central Texas, with a haunting blush of spring on the violet-crowned rim of the cup in which the capital city lies, on the banks of the Colorado River. Austin was one of the loveliest of the forty-eight State capitals, even then.

Mamma, Daddy and Dorrace were guests in our home until after the inaugural ceremonies were over, and the house looked like a national flower show. We sent flowers to the hospitals and gave them to relatives and friends, but still there was not room for all the beautiful blossoms that came. My poor servants used everything at hand for flower containers, borrowed vases from neighbors, and finally filled two washtubs with long-stemmed roses. Rare plants and blossoms were sent by air from other states. For once in Mamma's life she had enough flowers. She said it was too bad all those flowers had to be cut. She is a passionate and skillful dirt gardener.

The inundation of congratulatory letters and telegrams lasted a week. They bore many famous names: those that interested me particularly were from Will Rogers; Louis Mann, the actor; Billy Sunday; "Andy Gump"; Governor Nellie Tayloe Ross; Anne Morgan; Mme. Ernestine Schumann-Heink; John W. Davis; Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr.; Charles W. Bryan, then governor of Nebraska, and

Elizabeth Bates Dagama, wife of the Brazilian Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Then there was a cable from John C. Mackay, from Berlin, addressed to "Ma Ferguson, U.S.A."

The band played "*The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You*" as both the outgoing and incoming governors, with entourage, marched under the crossed sabers of the Sul Ross Volunteers and took their places on the speakers' stand in the House of Representatives.

It was not the same James Edward and Miriam Amanda Ferguson who had marched to this same platform back in 1915 for Daddy's inauguration. They had both gained considerable weight and the intervening years of trial and hardship had heavily sprinkled with silver their dark brown hair. Daddy looked quite handsome, I thought, in his black cutaway coat, and Mamma made a pretty picture in her black satin, trimmed with chinchilla and relieved at the neck line with real lace. Around her neck she wore a deep ivory feather boa. Her black hat, with feather ornamentation, was heavy compared with the light, minute bonnets we wear today. My five-year-old son, dressed in a navy blue serge sailor suit, sat between his grandparents. \* Dorrace, decidedly the prettiest of all the Fergusons, sat with George and me to the right of Mamma and the officials.

When all had taken their places on the platform May Peterson (now Mrs. Ernest Thompson), dressed in cowgirl costume, sang "*Put on Your Old Gray Bonnet*," accompanied by the Old Gray Mare Band from Brownwood, Texas. I often turn over in my mind this scene from the past and wonder how that magnificent voice from the Metropolitan came to sing that particular song at Mamma's inauguration. As her glorious voice filled the House of Representatives, "*The Old Gray Bonnet*" soared to lofty and unprecedented heights.

After the oath of office is administered, the outgoing governor customarily presents the incoming governor. Mamma was fortunate in this respect, for nowhere else in

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\* At the time of Mamma's first inauguration my five-year-old son was named Ernest, for his grandfather Nalle. When Mr. Nalle, Sr.'s, second wife named their baby Ernest, we changed our child's name to George, Jr., in justice to both the boys.



the world is there a more nearly perfect Chesterfield than Governor Pat M. Neff, of Texas, who had not run for re-election. If, as Schiller said, "There is a nobility in the world of manners," certainly Governor Neff is a nobleman.

Pat Neff, a Waco, Texas, lawyer, and later president of Baylor University, and the Fergusons had never been on the same side of any political fence, but that made no difference. His speech was gracious and becoming to the gentleman and scholar that he is. He had passed through a stormy administration, with all its Klan trouble. His orator's voice was steady, and he made a striking figure; he was well over six feet tall, lean, and with a leonine head and a mane of iron-gray hair.

Turning to Mamma, Governor Neff told her he was leaving a Bible on the governor's desk, in which he had marked the 105th verse of Psalm 119:

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

He added that he hoped the Good Book would prove a help and comfort to her in the many problems with which she was sure to be confronted during the next two years. He was speaking from experience, we knew. There have been some tranquil administrations in Texas; not many.

Since that day the marking of this Bible has become a tradition. Each outgoing governor marks a passage for his successor, though that unwritten rule was broken later, as we shall see.

After thanking Governor Neff, the Governor made a short speech of acceptance, from which I have selected these passages:

Deeply grateful for the honor bestowed and conscious of the solemn oath taken, it now becomes my duty to enter into the active service of the people. . . .

I extend to the judges of the courts, the heads of departments and especially to the members of the legislature a cordial and earnest invitation to visit the executive offices for conferences on matters personal and official. We are all humble servants of a great people and we must do our best for the common good. . . .

Recognizing and freely admitting my inexperience in governmental affairs, I must ask the advice and counsel of others.

Perhaps this would not be a bad idea for others to adopt, even though their training and learning may be far greater than mine. I shall endeavor to make this administration a success by team work. What Texas needs more than anything else at this time *is a strong pull, a steady pull, and a pull all together. . . .*

In no way did she try to conceal the fact that Daddy was going to be her adviser and that through team work they would run the office. In full round tones her voice boomed out a plea for cooperation. Continuing, she stated:

It is then, my people, that we must turn to God who can remove all envy and hate from every heart and unite us in love and forgiveness for all.

I am praying for this administration to be one of progress in matters spiritual as well as material. . . .

As the first woman governor of our beloved state, I ask for the good will and the prayers of the women of Texas. I want to be worthy of the trust and the confidence which they have reposed in me. . . .

Many women will be invited to take an active part in this administration. Let us give to our state the best there is in us. . . .

With love for all, with malice toward none, trusting in God, I consecrate my life to my state.

After reading this speech, one almost feels that it should end with "Amen." Her frank sincerity drew warm praise from the press.

Following the administering of the oath of office at high noon, the citizens of Austin entertained the new governor and the many out-of-town guests with an inaugural ball in the evening. Mamma's gown for the ball was a heavily beaded flesh-pink chiffon and Dorrace wore white with elaborate beaded ornamentation. My gown and wrap were presents brought me from Paris, France, (oh yes, we have a Paris in Texas) by George's aunt, Mrs. Asher Smoot. It was silver lace, delicately embroidered in gold beads over a



metal cloth slip of silver. All three of our dresses followed the customary pillowslip style of that year.

So great was the demand for tickets for Mamma's inaugural ball that it was necessary to have the ball at three places. First, there was a reception in the Senate Chamber at the Capitol, followed by a ball. Governor and Mrs. Neff attended the reception, but when the dancing started they retired to the Governor's Mansion. As Baptists, they are opposed to dancing.

From the Capitol we proceeded, under police escort, with sirens screaming, to the Austin Hotel for another ball. After an hour there, the Governor and her party went on to the ball at the Driskill Hotel.

Two days after the inauguration the Ferguson family moved back to the Executive Mansion. All of us piled into the old twin-six Packard, with Mamma at the wheel. It was, incidentally, the very same car in which we had departed from the Governor's Mansion in 1917. As Mamma pulled up the hand brake under the old porte-cochere at the Mansion, the new governor of Texas said, as if addressing the old chariot:

"Well, we have returned! We departed in disgrace; we now return in glory!"

Many times in the intervening years since 1917 Mamma had said: "Some day I am going to drive the old twin-six back to the Governor's Mansion!" She owned a shiny, new car when she did come back, but the old one was a symbol of victory!

Walking over the Mansion and grounds that first afternoon was like walking in a dream. Mamma noted many minor changes in furnishings and decorations; but the thing that struck her dumb was that her name had been taken out of the block of concrete at the threshold of the greenhouse, built during Daddy's first administration. It had been her pride and joy. Now, she sent post-haste for a concrete man, and had her name, with the date, 1915, restored to her flower house.

Gossip told us two years later that when some of the Ferguson enemies tried to persuade the wife of Governor

Dan Moody to remove the name once again from the greenhouse, Mrs. Moody told them:

"Not on your life! If I should do such a thing she would be sure to come back in again and restore her name."

That brings me to tell another story.

In his first year in office Daddy had been the guest of the Perry family, descendants of Stephen F. Austin, the "Father of Texas." In the Perry ancestral home the Governor saw and admired a desk that had once belonged to Stephen F. Austin. The heirs consented to placing the desk in the Governor's Mansion in what, because it contains General Sam Houston's bed, is known as the "Sam Houston Room."

One day, several years after Daddy left office, the state painter at the Capitol telephoned me in great agitation. He told me that the Austin desk had been stored in the Capitol basement for several years and was about to be sold that morning at public auction.

I rushed to the Capitol and explained to the Board of Control that the desk had only been loaned to Daddy to be used at the Mansion. They turned the desk over to me and I kept it in storage until Daddy could communicate with the heirs.

The Perrys came to Austin. I turned the desk over to them and they had the precious relic refinished and again placed in the Mansion. This time they marked it with a brass plate which stated that it was put in the Mansion during Governor Neff's administration. *Sic transit gloria Fergusonii.*

We didn't change that plate.

The last note of the hailing trumpets, with all the fanfare of the inauguration, had hardly died away before Miriam A. Ferguson found herself at grips with the responsibilities of her high office.

Finding competent persons for the many posts to be filled by executive appointment was the first task, to keep the machinery of government going. When the talent usually available for these positions is weighed, even a politician wonders whether or not the spoils system is better than civil service, which also has its drawbacks — that have nothing to do with vote-getting.



There were literally thousands of applicants for these positions; as usual, the chief qualification of most of them was that they were sorely in need of a job. Our government deserves and needs the best minds and talents, but it gets, too often, somebody's Cousin Willie, somebody's Brother Ed, Cousin Susie or Uncle Elmer, all willing, but not likely to be able to get the job done. In this deplorable state of affairs, it is a great wonder that our government is as efficient as it is. Civil service, on the other hand, can produce barnacles whose main concern is to cling to the hull of the ship of state, not caring how much it slows her.

There was also the big problem of a legislative program which Miriam A. Ferguson had promised in her platform, and this was no small order to fill.

Although the legislative branch of government often retards an executive program, at the same time it is a healthy check on too hasty enactment of laws. Therein lies the strength of our tri-partite form of government. Therein also can lie the weakness of an executive eager to enact reforms, and yet almost powerless, because of a hostile law-making body.

The setup in Mrs. Ferguson's first administration was quite simple. The legislators had been elected, not as Ferguson supporters in most instances, but as machine Democrats. The machine had been against Mamma until after the first primary, and it was hardly for her now.

The man on the street was asking:

"Can 'Ma' make good her economy program?"

Governor Miriam Ferguson had promised to cut biennial appropriations fifteen million dollars. It took a surgeon's cold nerve, but she trimmed the 1925-1926 budget the full amount promised.

A great howl of protest went up from all the State departments. Tremendous pressure was brought to bear upon the Governor by the departments that were cut. Some that were abolished screamed in agonized fury.

The Governor stood her ground. After weeks of wrangling with the legislature, she came out of the battle with thirteen millions saved the taxpayers—two millions short of her promise but about thirteen millions more than the

boys on the hill had expected her to cut. The woman was actually trying to live up to her campaign promises!

The Governor had promised to unmask the Ku Klux and "take the courts out of the swamps and put them back in the courthouse." In this instance she was successful in getting the legislature to pass a law making it a criminal offense to wear a mask in public. This frail woman had defeated the powerful Ku Klux Klan and now with one stroke of her pen she dealt it a deathblow. There has never been a chirp out of the Ku Klux in Texas since that law was passed.

When the Fergusons moved back to the Mansion my husband, my son and I went with them. Dorrace had no housekeeping experience, and with Mamma at the office all day, Daddy really needed me at the Mansion. I became head maid without pay.

I thoroughly enjoyed my job, especially the receptions and parties. Mamma and Dorrace did not enjoy these affairs so much; consequently, we did not have as many as I should have liked. Beyond the traditional huge reception for the legislators, the New Year "open house," and an occasional "at-home" day, there was very little entertaining. The \$4,000 salary of the Governor wouldn't permit it, and she was no longer wealthy.

On February 6, 1925, George and I celebrated our seventh wedding anniversary with a buffet supper; it was, on the whole, a sticky affair. Mamma never allowed liquor to be served, nor, for that matter, was smoking allowed, except by guests. It is interesting to record that Mamma never owned an ashtray.

It was my anniversary. I spiked the dessert with a little sherry, and took my scolding after the guests left.

Dorrace was asked to be queen of the Mardi Gras in Havana, Cuba, that year. My husband and I went along as her chaperones.

In 1924 Havana was glamorous and just being discovered by Americans, who went over in droves. Ours was a gay and beautiful experience. The Cubans are royal entertainers, and nothing was spared for our pleasure. Yet, amid all the Mardi Gras fun and frolic, my heart and mind were on what was going on in Texas. Each morning our friend, Mr. Miano,



sent the American papers to our rooms. Finally, there came the item I was looking for! The Amnesty bill, restoring to James Edward Ferguson the right to hold office in Texas, had passed both houses of the legislature! And Jim Ferguson's wife, as governor of Texas, had signed it!

That, ladies and gentlemen, was a day!

In the afternoon we sat on a balcony with the President of Cuba and his charming wife and watched the Isle of Pines parade. Afterward, we drank champagne and danced with Cuban and American officials at the Palace. It was a dazzling experience for two little girls from Temple, Texas, to be honor guests in the palace of the president of a foreign country! 'Twas a charmed life we Fergusons led sometimes.

Back in Texas we found Mamma deep in the problem of prison affairs. Her predecessor, Governor Neff, had granted very few pardons. In those days of prohibition the penitentiary was overflowing with short-term liquor law violators. Since Daddy had never been a prohibitionist, he naturally did not consider these violations a serious offense. However, it was a question that gave Mamma considerable concern. She and Daddy often had heated arguments over cases they took home for review in the evenings.

In her campaign the Governor had declared herself in favor of a more lenient use of the pardoning power. Penitentiary management had been one of the big accomplishments of her husband's administration, and, in consequence, she had announced that she would ask his advice in matters pertaining to prisons. She began to sign pardons that the Pardon Board recommended. When she took office, many pardons due by custom were issued to good prisoners under indefinite sentences. Many of these pardons had been due for months, and even years.

Immediately the lies began to fly over the state, lies that said Jim Ferguson was selling pardons. People couldn't say just to whom, but . . . !

A leading clubwoman arose at a luncheon in North Texas and vilified the Fergusons, declaring that in a roll of papers that she held in her hand she had proof that Jim Ferguson was selling pardons. She did not unroll the papers.

In the South and the Southwest a man must be careful how he answers a woman, lest public opinion turn against him for dealing harshly with the "weaker sex." Daddy wrote to this woman at once, registered the letter, sending it "Deliver to the addressee only. Receipt requested." He asked her if she had been misquoted. She did not answer his letter nor did she ever refer to him again in any of her speeches. There were hundreds of malicious gossips and liars he couldn't reach that way.

The liberal pardoning policy of the Ferguson administration was carried on out of principle, despite the hardship it worked on us. Every member of the family was besieged from morning until night by letters, telephone calls, and visitors pleading for some loved one who had disobeyed the laws of society, and had been imprisoned, but who deserved another chance.

The "pardon-selling lie" brought many offers of pay for a pardon. The letters I received I turned over to the grand jury for investigation; however, nothing was ever done about it because of the lies being told on Daddy. The Fergusons were again becoming unpopular in Austin, and such an investigation by a grand jury might have aided us materially in refuting the pardon-selling lie.

This may seem bitter, but the fact remains that the governor of Texas was accused of selling her power for cash — or what have you — and the lies were allowed to spread all over the state, and no one on behalf of the state moved a finger to bring the whispering campaign into the open and prove or disprove the truth of the charge. No one printed these stories, so there was no ground for a libel action. You can't sue an anonymous gossip for slander.

Why this persecution? Mamma had been elected in the bitterest campaign in the history of Texas. The issues went far deeper than politics. The woman governor had put through and signed into law that anti-mask bill that had killed the Klan, but not the Klansmen. She had added many enemies to the old hate-the-Fergusons phalanx. Some 200,000 voted for Felix Robertson, but 300,000 voted for the Republican Dr. Butte. These people were still alive, still in Texas, still bitterly anti-Ferguson and they still had tongues! To



fight the gossip was like fighting ghosts; you had nothing to hit.

The lowest insult I ever had came from a old friend. He telephoned one day to ask me to drop by his law office the next time I was downtown. I went gladly. He had been a Ferguson supporter since Daddy first entered public life, and I had no idea what he wanted.

When he asked me to come into his private office, and closed the door, I wondered what was coming. In a voice that was little more than a nervous whisper, he offered to split with me fifty-fifty a fee of \$5,000 if I would get my mother to grant a pardon to one of his clients.

I waited in silence until he had finished telling me just how easy the whole thing would be. Then I looked him straight in the eyes and said:

"Mr. — , I am a mother. Do you think for one moment that I could draw an easy breath if I knew that some mother's son was being held in the penitentiary because that mother did not have the money to pay me to use my influence to get her son a pardon? Your offer is a gross insult! If your case is worthy, the Board of Pardons will recommend to the Governor that your client be given a pardon, and it will not cost your client a red cent!"

I got up. I was so angry that my knees trembled.

"You have been our friend for many years, and I am simply unable to believe that you have credited this lie that we are selling pardons! Good morning!"

The man followed me all the way to the elevator, apologizing. I lost all control of my tongue and temper. The man was older than my father, and had been a good friend for many years, but I was furious that — well, all things pass. That's enough of that.

Every one of our clouds had silver linings; happy occasions followed unpleasant ones. Our interesting guests at the Mansion made us forget the bitter moments.

Mme. Ernestine Schumann-Heink with all her exuberance, visited us at the Mansion. She was like a breath of spring, or better, a "shot in the arm." She breezed in the front door, escorted by a group of World War I veterans. Throwing her arms about Mamma's neck, she exclaimed, in

her guttural English: "Mine Gott, don't you love the soldier boys?" There could never have been a first World War, much less a second one, if all the hearts of the German people had been as big and full of love for their fellowman as was that of Schumann-Heink. She was then past sixty, and had lost her once gorgeous voice, but she was still carrying on magnificently. Her voice was a thing of the past, but she didn't live in the past. Her eyes and heart looked ahead. When she died the world lost a great spirit.

Mme. Ernestine Schumann-Heink's "bread and butter" note to the Governor, sent from Houston, began: "Beloved Lady." She was beloved by us, too.

Knute Rockne, the coach of Notre Dame, visited us that first year. The idol of the football world, accompanied by the president of St. Edward's University, and several priests, called on the woman governor of Texas in her office. After their visit, she posed with them for a photograph on the front steps of the Capitol. Several governors from neighboring states also called on us.

The most popular celebrity we ever entertained, or who entertained us, was America's beloved Will Rogers. He came straight from the train to the Mansion in mid-afternoon with some University students. These youngsters had rigged the wheels of the automobile so that the hubs were off center. No bucking cow pony could have been rougher, but Will seemed to thoroughly enjoy the ride.

The Governor had asked some friends in to meet the cowboy from Oklahoma. When they went home to their dinners, Will stayed on. He was to give one of his commentary talks that evening. Mamma knew he was pumping her for stories he could fix up and tell the audience in his own way. Mamma was, as Texans express it, "not putting out much." Will kept trying to get her to talk: "Say, Ma, what do you think about so and so?" We expected her to rebuke him for using the nickname, but she ignored it. Rogers had met his match; the woman governor was making Will do all the talking.

In desperation he asked her to show him the greenhouse. Strolling under the pergola leading to the conservatory, she expressed regret that his train had been late, a circumstance



which had prevented his attending a luncheon she had arranged in his honor.

Rogers grinned and said: "Well, Ma, I'm awfully sorry I didn't get here, but I'll be hungry by suppertime."

"Oh, Mr. Rogers," Mamma exclaimed, "I'm so sorry. My experience with artists has been that they never eat before going on the platform. So, I didn't plan a dinner for you."

"Now, Ma," Will drawled, "that's just where you made your mistake. . . . Your experience has been with artists. I'm just an ordinary thirty-dollar-a-month cowhand, and it takes food and plenty of it to keep those ropes twirling while I chatter."

Mamma was nonplussed, but Will kept on talking:

"You know, I just can't understand why Texas towns have cleaned the tamale carts off the streets."

My husband came to the rescue:

"Mr. Rogers," George said, "if you enjoy Mexican food, we should like very much to have you go with us to a Mexican dinner. We get good Mexican food at a little restaurant we call 'The Greasy Spoon.' "

Rogers seemed delighted. As he took his leave of the Governor, she looked him straight in the eye and said:

"See here, you ugly devil, I am going to be in your audience this evening, and don't you razz me as you razz some people."

I don't remember what his reply was, but as George and I took him to his hotel afterward, he told us that Mamma's parting remark completely bowled him over. Will partook generously of every Mexican dish on the menu, and we then rushed him to his performance. As he walked onto the stage he spotted some aviators from Oklahoma on the front row of the audience. Calling them each by name, he asked them to rise and meet "Ma" Ferguson, governor of Texas. To Daddy he said: "Jim, there's no use introducing them to you; they don't vote in Texas."

Will Rogers visited us many times after that, and Mamma always had a big Mexican supper for him. He loved all the Mexican foods, but plain old *chili con carne* was his favorite. At one sitting I saw him eat nine bowls of *chili con*

*carne*, to say nothing of other Mexican dishes — *tacos*, *enchiladas* and *chili con queso*.

Not all our visitors were celebrities. Many came out of sheer curiosity to see what a woman governor looked like. Some days Mamma would come home from the office and tell us she now knew how the poor lions in a circus feel. But the friendly folk made up for a lot.

I was always interested in the penitentiary farms. On one of my visits to Huntsville the warden of the prison chanced to remark to me:

"We have five men in the death house now, awaiting electrocution, unless your mother does something about it."

The thought of five men waiting to be put to death sent cold shivers down my spine! Although my husband didn't think well of the idea, I determined to talk to them. The first two were white men, both sullen and reticent about answering questions. Willie, a Negro, was the third interviewed. He was eager to discuss his case.

"Yes, Miss, I'se guilty ob every one ob de murders I'se charged with. I don't deserve no consideration frum no-o-body. It all started two years ago when I was drunk one night out in a parked car wid a boy fren' of mine, an' two gals. One ob de gals was a-settin' in my lap when I looked aroun' and there wuz a cop a-drivin' up.

"Without nobody sayin' a word I quick pull my gun an' killed de policeman. When I see dat policeman keel over daid it sober me quick as a flash, an' I realize I wuz in for trouble!

"We started de car an' flew fas' as we could go down de big road out ob Dallas. But we knowed dey would soon be after us so we quits de car and takes to de fields. An' you know, Miss, I never did know whut went wid dem gals! For several days me an' de oder boy stay in dat field wif nothin' to eat. Finally, we git so harngrny we slip out at night and go to a farmhouse to ask fer somethin' to eat. We call 'Hello' at de gate an' when nobody answer we goes in de kitchen an' he'p ourselves. But, Miss, we doan take all dose folks' food; we jes' et some ob it.

"De nex' night we spent in a empty coal car on de



railroad tracks. In de mawnin' jes' as I woke up an' look up at de side ob de car, dar was a cop peepin' over de side ob de car at us. I kill him before I knowed whut I wuz doin'.

"As we run frum de dead policeman we knowed dey was close on de trail an' we wuz goin' to have to git out ob de country quick. We run every step ob de way to de nex' town. We finds a parked car wid a key lef' in it. We saw de gasoline was gettin' low, so we start lookin' fer anoder car. We found one parked by de road, but it wuz locked. We jes' take de gasoline out ob de tank. No, Miss, we didn't take all dat man's gas, we jes' took some ob it, an' lef' him nuff to git home.

"Long erbout noontime we come on a white woman in a car an' she have a flat. She hail us to stop an' fix de flat, which we did. Now, Miss, wouldn't dat lady have been scared if she know I had already killed two policeman? She gave us a dollar fer fixin' her flat, an' we kept on our way north as fast as dat flivver would travel. We bought grub wid de dollar an' borrowed gasoline frum cars along de way. But, Miss, we never did take all ob nobody's gas. We always lef' enuff in der tanks fer dem to git home.

"I had a cousin in Kansas City an' ef we could git to her house I felt we would be safe frum de law. Well, we did git to my cousin's house an' she wuz mighty glad ter see me. Ast me what I wuz doin' an' I jes' tole her me and my fren' wuz on a little trip together. I ask her if her husban' wuz a-workin' now an' she say: 'He's a cop on de regular force now.' Miss, when she tole me dat, I jes' turn cold all over. Den I went in de nex' room to tell my fren' we have to move on. A man's voice from de door behin' me say: 'Stick 'em up!'

"Miss, dey had us an' de chase wuz over. De relief at not havin' to run frum de law no mo' is wonderful. I'se glad to pay fer my sins wif my life. Yes, Miss, de Good Book tells us de wages ob sin is death. I'se been baptized, and I'se got religion.

"De good priest, he pray wid me every day. I'se spendin' my las' days writin' letters an' sermons to young men to let liquor alone. Miss, I ain't no bad nigger an' I never would-a killed dat first cop if I hadn't been drunk. If my dyin' in de

chair will be a lesson to oder young men, den praise de Lawd, I'se ready to meet my Maker."

Never once during my conversation with Willie did he say or even intimate that he would like for me to ask my mother to save him from the electric chair. The fact that the awful flight was over and that his life was going to save other young men seemed to furnish Willie with full comfort. Father Flanagan's conversations and prayers with this condemned creature had given him the necessary spiritual strength to face his death calmly and with almost a joy in his soul.

The worst hours in the Governor's Mansion came on nights when there was to be an electrocution at the penitentiary at Huntsville. The family, lawyers and friends of the condemned made a final plea to the Governor on the afternoon prior to the electrocution. The more horrible the crime of the condemned, the more interest the public took in the terrible penalty, and the greater the number of pleas for commutation of the death sentence.

After the courts assessed the death penalty — and in most cases there had been an appeal to the highest court — and the Board of Pardons and the Governor had reviewed the case, justice was pretty sure to have been done. But telegrams and telephone calls poured in from all corners of the state until the very last moment in an effort to persuade the Governor that a great injustice was about to be committed.

These appeals would cast gloom over our entire household. The pleas became so frantic in most cases that the Governor was made to feel like a murderer. To let the law against capital punishment take its course was the hardest single duty the Governor was called upon to do. As a woman and a mother it was extremely hard to withhold that one word that would save some mother's son from death in the electric chair.

The last person to call over long distance at exactly midnight was the warden, who had to throw the switch on the electric chair. Mamma always dreaded the voice that followed the twelve o'clock tingle of the telephone.

"Hello, Governor," he would say. "We are ready to go,



but I want final word from you that you are not going to commute this sentence. . . .”

From our beds, every member of the family listened. We knew full well that the Governor would hang up the telephone receiver in a burst of tears, and that nobody in the house would close an eye the rest of the long night.

The Governor could have cut off her telephone and thereby have spared herself this harrowing experience time after time, but she reasoned that no conscientious executive would put herself beyond the reach of a human life she held in her hands. She argued: Suppose that the condemned person, brought face to face with the electric chair, should decide to talk. Information might be given at the very last moment that would change the entire case. Every governor holds a dread that the State might execute an innocent person. Miriam A. Ferguson always held herself available to the bitter end, and the cup she drank was bitter to the dregs.

One afternoon Mamma came home early from the governor's office, silent and pensive. We sensed that we must be in for another of those terrible nights before an execution. Everybody tried to make conversation, but there was gloom over the Mansion. Our evening meal was progressing slowly and silently when the Governor cried out:

“I can't let it happen! That Mexican boy is just past twenty-one, and this is his first offense!” She burst into tears.

Startled, Daddy looked up. “Well,” he said, “you are the Governor; you have the power to stop it.” Brady, the Negro butler at the Mansion, had been snatched from the electric chair by a previous governor and paroled to household duty at the Mansion. Dropping the dish of potatoes that he was passing to us, he dashed out to the telephone and put in a call for the warden at Huntsville penitentiary. He came back, tiptoeing, to call the Governor to the telephone. Mamma got up and went out without a word — to tell the warden it would be life, and not death, for the condemned boy.

Old Brady told us later that the mother of this Mexican boy had been at the back door of the Mansion that morning asking to see the Governor, and that he had sent her on to the executive office at the Capitol. Brady told us that all day

he had been feeling in his own mind what the condemned boy was going through: the shaving of his head; the slitting of one leg of his trousers; the prayers with the *padre* and that last supper, for which he could have anything he wanted to eat. The psychological effect of these preparations on the mind of a condemned person must almost be punishment enough for the crime committed.

These long, sorrowful nights depressed my quiet, peace-loving husband. Public limelight was distasteful to him. He had married an ex-governor's daughter, remember! And here we were again in the Governor's Mansion! We were not just "one big, happy family." George disliked the early meal hours that fitted into the Governor's routine, and was, consequently late at almost every meal. Too, I was constantly agitating to have more parties, and Mamma was too much occupied at her office to take an interest in much entertaining. My young son, George, Jr., was constantly in his Aunt Dorrace's hair in one way or another. Perhaps he was paying her back in kind for some of the alarm clocks she had hung out for his parents during their courting days. Too, my son had been made an honorary colonel on the Governor's staff. This had caused much talk.

On June 10, 1926, I paid the Nalle's part of the month's grocery bill and moved with my family, together with my copy of the Sam Houston bed, into an apartment George owned on Nueces street. Thereby hangs another of those many tales about the Fergusons.

Early in Mamma's administration I had an exact copy made of the historic old Sam Houston bed that graces the state bedroom of the Governor's Mansion. This magnificent old tester bed was used by General Sam Houston, the first governor of Texas, who was also president of Texas when it was a republic. I made a facetious remark one evening to a group at the Mansion to the effect that I thought my bed would some day be as famous as the original. I said: "The original bed was used by the first governor of Texas, but the first woman governor of Texas has slept in mine." My remark promptly found its way to an unfriendly newspaper.

The press panned me to a brown turn, and even insinuated that I might have switched the beds! This was an insult,



not only to my integrity, but also to my intelligence. Anybody who knows anything about antiques can easily tell when a piece is a copy.

I considered this as a good joke on me, but Mamma was terribly put out. She had slept in the bed only a few times. Every time Daddy ever spent the night with us, he slept in that bed. After all, he was my parent, my beloved Daddy and my governor. When the bed is mentioned in Mamma's presence, and I refer to it as "The bed I stole," she never fails to get angry.

In the front hall at the Mansion sit two exquisite love seats that came out of the old French Embassy, in Austin. These were the gifts of Miss Emma Burleson. My sister Dorrace had a copy made of one, but that was perfectly permissible and proper; she didn't get into print over it as Ouida had done about the Houston bed. But then, it will be remembered that it was Ouida and Jim who were the "stirrer-uppers" in the Ferguson family. Someway, we were always breaking into print and bringing wrath upon the clan.

The late spring of 1926 found Governor Miriam Ferguson a candidate to succeed herself. In the beginning she had promised not to run for a second term, but because of the fact that she had been unable to complete certain important tasks that she had started, she decided to run again. She also considered that her first term was but the completion of Daddy's second term, which he had not been allowed to finish.

The question of whether or not she should run again was thoroughly thrashed out in the family council. My husband listened evening after evening to the heated debates on the subject, but never offered his opinion. Finally, Daddy asked him: "George, what do you think of Mamma's running for governor again?"

The ever-tactful George evaded the question. "My goodness alive, don't ask me, Governor Jim. I never would have had the nerve to run her the first time."

Dan Moody, the young, fighting, red-headed attorney-general, elected in 1924 as an anti-Klan crusader on the ticket with the Governor, now ran against her. The Klan was dead in Texas and no longer a political issue. We now

had national prohibition. The old prohibition and exoneration-for-Jim Ferguson issues were replaced by new ones.

With the freedom of speech allowed in political campaigns, the same old enemies again took after Jim Ferguson, hammer and tongs, charging corruption in office. "Two governor's for the price of one . . . Jim's price," was their slogan. They never proved a single charge they made, and I won't waste white paper refuting them.

There has been a precedent in Texas, based on George Washington's serving his country only two terms (and no more), that every governor is entitled to a second term in office. This two-term precedent lost the Fergusons many votes. His opponents argued that Jim had had one, and a fraction of another term, and his wife had had one: that made two for the Fergusons.

*"Those whom the gods would destroy they first make mad."* Daddy lost his temper during the campaign and said some things he would not have said on sober thought. This also lost us many votes. Hot words passed and feeling ran high. That is putting it mildly.

Again the opposition adopted their old tactics of trying to break up our meetings. Instead of the walkout method used by the Ku Kluxers, this time they stationed men throughout the audience to ask the speaker questions. Whether the question was answered or ignored made no difference. In chorus they booed so loudly that the speaker's reply could not be heard.

To hold the attention of an audience in the face of organized heckling is most difficult. In spite of Daddy's tremendous voice, he could not always make himself heard over the cries and catcalls. This situation reached a point where something had to be done.

Loud speakers or public address systems could not be rented in 1925 for a few hours at a time, for a nominal fee, as they can be today. The University of Texas owned one, but would not rent or lend it for political use. Daddy was to speak in Wooldridge Park, in Austin. We knew that without a loud speaker of some kind it would be futile for him to attempt to make the speech. Austin was always the hotbed of Ferguson opposition. My husband solved the



problem with his knowledge of electricity and physics. He knew he could count on the generosity of friends. From H. A. Wroe he borrowed a fine electric phonograph, from the J. R. Reed Music Company two more, and a fourth from the Bledsoe Music Company. This fine equipment he perched atop the four corners of the speaker's stand. A microphone hookup gave magnificent amplification to Daddy's voice. Again the Fergusons were first: that was the first time electric amplification was used in a political campaign in Texas.

George and I stayed at the park late that night with a moving crew, working to get those beautiful machines down from their precarious perches, and under cover. I was afraid all through the speaking that some unreconstructed Klansman would pull a pistol and riddle them. But this was 1926, not 1924.

There were two other women in the first Democratic primary in July. If one woman could be governor, why not another? Well, why not, if she can get the votes?

The first primary vote was:

Dan Moody	409,732
Governor Miriam A. Ferguson	283,482
Lynch Davidson	122,449
O. F. Zimmerman	2,962
Mrs. Edith E. Wilmans	1,580
Mrs. Kate M. Johnston	1,029
	<hr/>
	821,234

The young attorney general had failed to win a majority over all the others by less than a thousand votes. He was, quite plainly, the people's choice this time. In the run-off he polled 495,723 against 270,595 for the Governor. He polled 233,068 in the November election against the Republican H. H. Haines' 31,531. The Socialist vote was 908.

Well, there would be another election in 1928!

As soon as we learned of our defeat, my husband, our young son and I hied away to New England to spend the rest of the summer.

The day following our return in September I called at the governor's office to ascertain what I had missed in my absence. When I entered, Mamma was holding in her hand a letter from the New York committee in charge of entertaining Queen Marie of Rumania. Her Majesty was scheduled to arrive in New York in October. The letter requested that the Governor of Texas either come to New York, or send one or two women representatives to assist in entertaining the Rumanian queen. Knowing that Mamma's leaving the state was out of the question, I immediately asked that I be allowed to go as one of the representatives. This brought a storm of opposition upon my head from both my parents. Daddy argued that I had just returned from the East. As he expressed it: "You still have New York dust in your shoes; besides, this honor should go to some poor unfortunate who has not had the advantages of travel you have had."

Frankly, my feelings were terribly hurt, but this was no time to get in a huff. If I was to see the queen, I must stand by my guns and win the trip. It so happened that there had been repercussions recently from just such another philanthropic appointment as Daddy was now proposing, one which the Governor had made earlier. I reminded them of this unhappy outcome.

I finally won the argument and my husband took me to New York to meet Her Majesty, Queen Marie of Rumania.

I found the Queen much interested in Texas and its history. Her questions taxed my knowledge. The vast area of Texas seemed to impress her most of all. After my first chat with her she never failed to call me by name at later functions. As a politician she was a past master. After we became better acquainted I told her: "Your Majesty, with your ability to remember names you could easily be elected governor of Texas." She laughed and said she might try it.

The Governor appointed Nettawin Moses, my husband's cousin, who was then living in New York, the other Texas representative to meet the Queen. This pleased me tremendously, and quite made up for their early objections to my going.

For one whole week we attended teas, luncheons, din-



ners and balls, over which Her Majesty ruled with queenly grace. It was a glorious experience, and one I shall always cherish.

Mamma's administration ended with nothing else that was memorable to me, until, in January 1927, it was time to inaugurate her successor.

Many people asked Mamma: "Are you going to appear on the same platform with Dan Moody, after all he said about your husband last summer?"

"Certainly," the Governor replied. "As the retiring governor, it is my duty to present the incoming governor to the people of Texas. "

Perhaps the bitterest of Moody's charges was the promise he made to the people of Huntsville, the town where the penitentiary is located, that if they would elect him governor he would see to it that "Old Jim Ferguson" was made one of their citizens. This was a hard speech, and certainly Dan didn't fulfill this promise. Time healed the scars of battle and during Daddy's last illness, Dan showed his bigness with many inquiries about Daddy's condition.

Miriam A. Ferguson marched in serenely with the flaming-haired Dan Moody and took her seat beside him during the inaugural ceremonies. After he was sworn into office she made this speech of presentation:

Ladies and gentlemen of the Fortieth Legislature:

In the natural order of events the time has come for me to surrender the powers and privileges of the governor's office to my successor. The people have spoken and every good citizen should bow to the will of the majority. Personal ambitions are but an incident to the public good and all personal disappointments soon pass away into the memory of yesterday.

I shall not dwell at length on the accomplishments of my administration. My record speaks for itself. It can not be changed — either added to or taken from.

If in the passion and prejudice of the hour my mistakes are magnified and my achievements are minimized, I shall find consolation in the fact that I am not the first governor who has had to suffer the same penalty as the price for political honor.

If I am condemned and criticized I shall not murmur because I remember that Sam Houston, the Father of Texas, paid the same penalty. If I am hated and abused I shall forgive my enemies and find comfort in the recollection that Jim Hogg,\* when he laid down the reins of power, was also hated and abused.

Regardless of the discussion of the hour I am sure that posterity will give me credit for what I have done and left undone. Not until my administration is compared with that of my predecessor and my successor will my public service be accurately determined.

The office of governor has its trials and tribulations, its sunshine and its shadows, its satisfaction and its disappointments. The public generally expects too much of the governor and is all too much inclined to deny credit for what has been done. In retiring to private life I do so with malice toward none and good will toward all. Whatever disappointment I may have had is more than balanced by the realization that on the morrow I will be relieved from the burdens which have been grievous to bear. While my term of office has been shortened my life has been lengthened.

For a season, at least, I shall tarry in our capital city and enjoy the pleasures and privileges of capital private life which it has been impossible to enjoy in public life.

My friends, the people in their sovereign right have elected another governor. Their verdict at the polls was that they wanted, not only another man for governor, but they said they wanted a young man for governor. Frankly, he was not my choice for governor. He may not have been your choice. But be that as it may, whether you like it or not, he is now your governor. As for me, I bow to the voice of the people and bid him godspeed as he assumes the responsibility of office. Let us all, regardless of past differences, help and hold up the hands of the people's choice in the interest of the public good. If he makes a success we all ought to be pleased — if he makes a failure some of you can be pleased.

I congratulate Mr. Moody upon his election. His election as a 34-year-old governor was about as novel as my election as a woman governor. Time alone will prove whether the people have acted wisely in either instance.

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\* Governor of Texas, 1891-95.



Therefore, my friends, with these few passing remarks it is my privilege and my pleasure to present to you your governor, Mr. Daniel J. Moody. Hear ye him.

After the ceremonies were over she went back to the governor's office and marked in the Bible left by Governor Neff the twelfth verse of the seventh chapter of Matthew:

*Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

Her term was over. She was no longer governor of Texas. After handing over the keys to the office and the Mansion she drove to my home where we had a family reunion and a luncheon together as private citizens.

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## CHAPTER XIX

### **Amnesty Again The Issue**

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THE three Fergusons moved to the Driskill Hotel in Austin at the close of Mamma's first administration. After a few months at the hotel they rented the residence of Mrs. Lewis Hancock, at the corner of Eighth and Lavaca streets in Austin, where they lived until their own home at 1500 Windsor Road was completed. Mamma was happy to settle down once more to her own home, vine and fig tree. The new Ferguson home was a pleasant, Spanish colonial house with a nice garden, where Mamma could putter with her flowers.

I sincerely believe that, had our enemies left matters as they were, we Fergusons would have been content to retire then. His old foes feared Jim Ferguson, and just to be on the safe side, they passed a bill rescinding the Amnesty bill that had been passed in Mamma's first administration: it was that act that restored to Daddy the right to hold office in Texas, and expunged the impeachment proceedings from the Senate records. Governor Dan Moody signed the new bill that rescinded the Amnesty bill. This fact, together with Mamma's defeat, spurred them both on to try again.

Governor Moody carried the primary in 1928 and was re-elected. Mamma did not run. That was the year Herbert Hoover, Republican, carried Texas against Alfred E. Smith, Democrat, for President. A strange bedfellow for Texas!

Although no Ferguson was a candidate for office in 1928, both Fergusons took an active part in the race for the United



States Senate. Our good friend Colonel Alvin Owsley of World War I fame and later National Commander of the American Legion opposed Senator Tom Connally for his seat in the U. S. Senate. Earle B. Mayfield was also a candidate in that race. The full Ferguson support went to Colonel Owsley. The erudite Owsley, who was far better equipped and educated to be Ambassador to the Court of St. James than to hold his own in a rough and tumble Texas political campaign, did not win.

Had the Amnesty bill been allowed to stand, there is a grave question as to whether or not Daddy could have been elected again. In rescinding the Amnesty bill the enemy handed his wife a stout plank on which to stand for reelection in 1930. She was opposed to Ross Sterling, a millionaire oil man from Houston and nine other primary candidates! Sterling had no experience in public speaking. His speeches, of but few words, usually started off: "Folks, here's your big fat boy from Buffalo Bayou." He had started the *Houston Dispatch* — bought and merged with it the *Houston Post*, a landmark of the Texas press. He had sold his shares in the Humble Oil Company.

Sterling's friends made lengthy orations in his behalf. He was presented as the man who could best run the affairs of state because he had been a success in the oil business. The big businessman, they promised, would make a great governor.

Strange as it may seem, it does not follow that a man successful in private business will possess the type of ability that it takes to run the state's business. Government business requires particular training and an entirely different approach from that required for success in private business.

Jim Ferguson had always shown an uncanny ability for making the State penitentiary self-supporting, but he was never a great success in running his own private business. He made several small fortunes, but they always vanished. His financial ups and downs made his children extremely conservative. But life with Daddy was never static. We knew that one of his "lows" was but the forerunner of a "high."

That first race against Ross Sterling was extremely strenuous. Traveling separately most of the time, and in opposite

quarters of the state, the two Fergusons campaigned from the Red River to the Rio Grande and from the piney woods of East Texas to the high plains of the West.

Mamma was to make her last speech of that campaign in San Antonio, on the Thursday night before the primaries on Saturday. On Wednesday, her sister's husband, Dr. Perry McElhannon of Belton, and Frank Denison of Temple arrived in Austin. They told us that Mamma was in great danger of being kidnapped or assassinated in San Antonio and that they had come armed to escort her to fill this last date. Each wore his trusty sidearm.

Although we were feeling the tension of the campaign, it had not entered our heads that Mamma might be in any physical danger. Although amused at the fears of the men, we were at the same time thankful to have them on hand. They led the caravan that departed from Austin Thursday morning.

Stuart Watt of Austin was courting Dorrace that summer; he went along to be with her. George, Mamma and I brought up the rear in my automobile. Our party occupied a large suite in the Plaza Hotel.

Mamma had many callers during the afternoon, among them Mr. Albert Kronkosky, who brought a large bouquet of flowers and a box of crystallized fruit. He was extremely cordial and expressed the sincere hope that she would win on Saturday. Just before taking his leave, however, he explained: "Governor, I wanted to come and have a little visit with you this afternoon, because I won't be able to come to hear you speak tonight. You know a man in my position dare not go out after dark for fear of kidnappers."

We pricked up our ears but he left without explaining further.

After a little while Mr. R. W. Morrison came to pay his respects and expressed his regrets that he would not be able to come to the speaking that evening. He said: "You know a man in my position dare not go out in San Antonio after dark."

By this time we could hardly hold straight faces. "Have the San Antonio people gone screwy?" we asked ourselves. But Mr. Morrison went on to explain how he had been kid-



napped once and taken to Austin, where he was kept for days with his eyes and mouth taped.

This opened our eyes still wider. The more we thought about it the more frightened we became. Perhaps Dr. McElhannon and Frank Denison were right after all. Mamma calmed us with: "Kidnappers want money and that would scratch me off their list."

She spoke that evening in front of the historic Alamo. The committee had arranged a speaker's stand on two enormous trucks in front of the entrance of the sacred shrine of Texas liberty.

Jimmie Young, a fiery young San Antonio attorney, introduced Mamma. The hallowed spot gave both speakers an ideal opportunity to deliver themselves of much patriotic Texas oratory. The audience was so great that one paper carried the headlines: "FERGUSON CROWDS NOW MEASURED BY THE ACRE."

Although we received a marvelous ovation in San Antonio, there was a still small voice that kept telling me that all was not well. The small voice was no doubt the echo of the prophecies of the newspaper men with whom I had talked in those last few days.

When I opened my eyes the next morning, the small voice was warning me to get Mamma home safely and start for Marlin, where Daddy was to close the campaign that evening. Perhaps I was afraid he might be kidnapped or harmed. I don't know; I can only recall a strange feeling of doom.

Dog days were at their peak. We reached Austin just before noon on one of the hottest days of the year, deposited Mamma at home and drove on a hundred miles to Marlin.

Daddy made one of the best speeches of his political career that evening in Marlin. The crowd was huge. In spite of the ovations both Fergusons had received in those last two speeches, I was uneasy. I had absorbed some political acuteness, perhaps, since I was thirteen.

We could hardly hope to win by a clear majority over ten opponents in the first primary. This was the vote:

Mrs. Miriam A. Ferguson	242,959
Ross S. Sterling	170,754
Clint C. Small	138,934
Thomas B. Love	87,068
James Young	73,385
Barry Miller	54,652
Earle B. Mayfield	54,459
C. C. Moody	4,382
Paul Loven	2,724
Frank Putman	2,365
C. E. Walker	1,760
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	833,442

In the run-off in August there were actually 24,331 more votes cast than had been cast for all eleven candidates in July. Some 473,371 people apparently wanted to see what a big businessman would do as governor. The Ferguson vote was 384,420. This book is not written to analyze election returns. Texas got its first millionaire businessman governor. The Republicans, having carried the state for Mr. Hoover in 1928, polled only 62,224 votes in the November 1930 election for governor.

Ross Sterling's newspapers in Houston in 1920-1925 emphatically had not attacked the Ku Klux Klan. But let that sheeted skeleton stay buried and buried deep! We were defeated by 89,000. Better luck next time!

The Fergusons once more settled down to private life, encouraged by the assurance of political prognosticators that Sterling would be a one-term governor. In two more years there would be an opportunity for us to try again. Meanwhile, we were all living in Austin, where political fences are built fast and torn down faster.

The following January was exceedingly cold. For days the ground was covered with sleet and snow. George's cousin, Tom Gregory, was to be married in San Antonio to Miss Maria Taylor. We Nalles planned to motor down to San Antonio for the wedding.



When Mamma learned of our plans, she telephoned to my husband:

"George, I think I have been a pretty good mother-in-law in that I have not meddled with your business; but I feel I must meddle now. If you and Ouida must go to San Antonio, I want to request that you go on the train instead of slipping and sliding around on the icy highway in a car."

George laughed. "Why certainly, Governor, you have been a marvelous mother-in-law; but I think you are worrying unnecessarily. We'll be as safe on that road as we would be in bed at home."

Immediately upon our return I telephoned Mamma. Dorrace answered, her voice very doleful.

"What in the world is the matter with you?" I asked her.

"Oh, Ouida, haven't you heard? Daddy fell out of bed last night and broke his collarbone!"

Daddy suffered a great deal with the fracture, and, although we felt terribly sorry for him, at the same time we teased him unmercifully. Finally, he lost patience with us and roared: "I don't see anything so damned funny about a fellow having a nightmare and breaking his collarbone!"

My earliest recollections of Granny Ferguson is of Daddy's trying to awaken her from one of her nightmares in the middle of the night. Daddy either had inherited this nightmare tendency or had acquired it.

I quote now from Daddy's diary, which he started to keep in 1929:

This is the 31st day of August, 1929; it is my birthday, and my good wife has presented me with this red-backed book, with the suggestion that I begin the keeping of a personal diary on this, my 58th birthday. . . . My darling daughter, Ouida, has presented me with an old-fashioned powder horn, and I have just received from her a radiogram from aboard the Steamer *Espagne*, somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean, sending birthday greetings. My dear daughter, Dorrace, has presented me with a bottle of Bay Rum, and if somebody would just present me with a bottle of Bacardi Rum, I would be prepared for both external and internal treatment. . . . At this period in my life I am still

so busy with public and private affairs I will not be able to record daily affairs as they occur. But from the suggestion of my wife I am led to believe that in the years to come it will be beneficial, if not interesting, to my friends and family to make a record of the important days in my life, and I shall attempt this in this record. This is perhaps the more appropriate function of a diary. At home on my birthday with my wife and Dorrace.

September 1st, 1929 . . . Left Dallas Monday, (Labor Day) and reached Haskell at 6 P. M. Judge Luther Nickels and Pinkey Francis with me. Here in Haskell to attend court in a case involving my sister, Kate's, will. I dislike law suits, especially with my own kin. . . . The litigation will go on indefinitely.

Sept. 9, 1929 . . . Went to the ranch in Bosque county and found that the long drouth which had continued since May broken by a five-inch rain. The merchants and businessmen of Clifton held a trade's day on Wed. I made a speech by invitation of the Lion's Club on farming and dairying. There was a large crowd, probably 2,000 people.

I find, as I am growing older, a growing fascination for Livestock farming. I find my thoughts unconsciously drifting more and more to cattle and politics. I have many times resolved to quit taking any part in campaigns but there is an irresistible influence that continually draws me into political campaigns. One reason is, that I realize the necessity more and more that everybody take more interest in governmental affairs or the government will fall. To be effective in this service one must take an active interest in politics.

I have recovered much of my strength and vigor that I had lost in the last few months my wife was in the governor's office in 1926 and I feel a rising desire to again enter a political campaign. At this writing I do not know just what role I will play in next year's 1930 campaign but I am sure I will be on the firing line somewhere . . . We talk about it in the family circle very often. . . . Time will prove whether we are again on the way to another campaign. . . .

Oct. 12, 1929. . . . There is much financial distress in the country on account of the short crops. Stock gambling in



N. Y. is taking thousands of dollars out of all the states and a financial panic seems certain in the next year. . . . High living as well as the high cost of living is adding to our trouble. . . .

Nov. 5th, 1929. . . . Am receiving many letters asking me to run for Governor, but not enough yet to justify me in giving out an announcement. I hope my financial affairs will get easier soon as I am now past 58 and I hope to be able to quit work by the time I am 60. I will be satisfied on very little. I have come to the place where I no longer take myself very seriously or anybody else and I am realizing that one man amounts to but very little.

Jan. 18, 1930. . . . We have had the coldest weather in the history of Texas. Last night it was only 3 degrees above zero. . . . The Legislature is meeting in special session next Monday.

Nov. 2, 1930. . . . Many things have happened since I last wrote in my diary in Feb. My right to go on the Democratic ticket was denied by the Supreme Court and the Amnesty law passed by the legislature to give me back my full citizenship was held unconstitutional. The decision however was no surprise as the regular Supreme Court disqualified without any reason and Dan Moody, my political enemy as governor, appointed two additional members to sit in my case who were also my political enemies and true to form very promptly held me disqualified from going on the ticket. This and many other developments make me feel very resentful of the evident corruption of the courts. . . . As the courts would not let my name on the ticket my wife announced for governor again. . . .

The next eighteen pages of Daddy's diary were devoted to crops, rainfall and the scientific raising of hogs.

On June 6, 1931, Dorrace was married to Mr. Stuart Watt, of Ausin. From Daddy's diary of May 25, 1931, I quote:

My baby daughter, Dorrace, is to be married in June to Mr. Stuart Watt. I have some hopes for him as a son-in-law, because he does not talk much and does not smoke

cigarettes. But marriage is, or has become, a lottery, and even the parties themselves do not know what is in store for them. They can only try it out and see where they land.

How prophetic were Daddy's words!

With 1932 was to come another primary year, and another opportunity for the Ferguson team to seek the governor's chair. There was now one new fly in the amber: Mamma liked her house up on Windsor Road so much that she didn't want to leave it and move to the Governor's Mansion. But when her spring garden had bloomed, she was out on the stump again, picking the biennial passion flowers of politics. There is no curing some people of gardening or of "politicking" in Texas.



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## CHAPTER XX

### And Again!

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IN THE SPRING of 1932 the *New York Times* said: "Again and again. . . . The Fergusons are campaigning again for the Governorship. Ma and Jim have returned to the headlines."

The two Fergusons, once a novelty in politics, had become a biennial fixture.

The prognosticators were right. Ross Sterling was a one-term governor.

There were nine candidates. Only three polled any considerable vote: Mrs. Ferguson, 402,238; Ross S. Sterling, 296,383 and Tom F. Hunter, 220,391. Total vote in July: 967,928. In the run-off Miriam A. Ferguson's vote was 477,644 and Sterling's 473,846. Pretty close! But the Fergusons had been vindicated again.

Governor Sterling and his friends did not give up without a struggle. They took the fight to the State Convention in Lubbock. All over Texas they held rump conventions and elected delegates friendly to Sterling. Rumors poured in from all sides that Sterling was going to use the State Rangers to seat these delegates, who would declare the run-off primary void, and nominate "the big fat boy from Buffalo Bayou" for re-election.

The boys from the forks of the creek heard the call that Daddy sent out through his "Little Christian Weekly," *The Ferguson Forum*. He told his friends he knew times were

hard and money scarce, but this was one time he needed them; please make a desperate effort to get there.

East Texas had always been a Ferguson stronghold. Those old boys over there in the sandy land have believed in Jim ever since he ran the first time, in 1914. Although this was 1932, the depth of the depression, and although Lubbock was some several hundred miles west, and few of them had money, they were not daunted.

"Suppose Sterling should attempt to seat his delegates with the aid of the Texas Rangers?" they cogitated together. If this happened Jim and Ma would certainly need us. We can't fail Farmer Jim and Ma."

Some committees passed the hat to send their regular delegates. Delegates from other communities borrowed the money to get there.

From the piney woods of East Texas came one delegation in a Model "T" Ford. The five in this group had left home with six dollars and seventy-five cents among them. Gasoline was their only expense. They camped out the two nights along the way. A bucketful of cold biscuits, a side of bacon, three dozen eggs, a can of coffee, a coffeepot and a skillet were the commissary. Each wore his trusty sidearm, for there might be trouble: *you never can tell*.

The hotel lobbies fairly bristled with ten-gallon hats, high-heeled boots and six-shooters when we arrived. Rumors continued to pour in as to how the enemy intended to take over the convention. Certainly the presence of so many Rangers was ominous. The air was tense. Hour by hour we listened to tales and propaganda, plots and stratagem. As our friends arrived, with blood in their eyes, the picture gradually began to change. I have never seen Daddy more touched and emotionally upset than he was as these tried and true friends came, pledging their support to vote and shoot if need be.

When the five delegates arrived in the antique flivver with the coffeepot and the skillet, Daddy was as busy as the mother of a large family when all the children and grandchildren come home for a visit. He dashed about like an American Express tour conductor seeing that they got hotel rooms.



As the opening of the convention drew nearer the "pistol-totin' ten-gallon hats" began to thin out. By the morning of the opening, the air had completely cleared, and the convention went off harmoniously. Miriam A. Ferguson was declared the Democratic nominee for governor. We considered the enemy vanquished and the job in the bag, because, of course, Democratic nomination is the equivalent to election in Texas. (Despite the defeat of Alfred E. Smith, we still say that as part of the law and the prophets.) But our troubles were not over — not by a long shot.

Upon our return to Austin we found that the Sterling faction had filed suit to contest Miriam Ferguson's right to hold office. Sterling's friends, we were sure, did not hold the slightest hope of winning their case; their sole object was to entangle her in court and keep her name off of the ticket at the general election in November. When they lost in the hearing, the ballots would already have been printed minus her name.

In order that the opposition might get their case into the October term of court, and an injunction granted before the ballots were printed, it was necessary to serve Mamma with the papers before midnight of the second day after our return to Austin from Lubbock. Mamma and Daddy knew, of course, that they had only to avoid service of the citation until it was too late.

Daddy went downtown in the morning, but when Stuart Watt discovered that the going and coming of the family was being watched, it was considered best that Daddy remain at home that afternoon with Mamma.

He telephoned me about the middle of the afternoon. He now feared the enemy might swear out a search warrant and enter his home to serve the citation.

What was the best thing to do?

At nightfall, George brought them to our house and I secluded them upstairs. We were right back in politics again, George and all. About nine o'clock our doorbell rang; I went to the door. A man who was obviously an officer asked if I knew where he could find my mother and father. You guess what I told him. After this inquiry we went into a family caucus, only to be interrupted by another ringing of

the doorbell. It was a friend, come to warn me that if my parents were in my house, I should get them out in a hurry: she had inside information that my house was to be searched.

The enemy was closing in. I rushed upstairs and told Mamma and Daddy to make ready for an immediate flight — where, I did not know. Down the back stairs, in a complete blackout, we picked our way to the garage where George waited, with the engine running.

We were not a block down the street when I realized we had taken the wrong car, for mine was easily identified at night by the widely separated headlights. It was too late to go back and take the car of George's aunt. Our one hope was to get out of the county and remain out until after midnight. Once that zero hour was safely past, nothing could stop Miriam A. Ferguson from being the next governor of Texas. The final decision of the court we did not fear.

The Burnet road to our ranch offered the quickest exit from the county, with the least traffic. Our nerves were on edge. Every car whose lights appeared behind us might bring pursuers with that citation. I knew then how it feels to be hunted.

Once across the county line we breathed a concerted sigh of relief and proclaimed Mamma the Democratic Party's nominee.

To keep going and remain outside the county until after midnight would take more gasoline than was in the tank. In Liberty Hill we stopped at Bell's filling station, awakened Mr. Bell and had the tank filled. For a long time after that experience I checked the gasoline in my car every afternoon and never let the sun go down with the tank less than three-quarters full.

I know now how Granny Ferguson used to feel when she visited her daughter Kate. Granny feared the West Texas windstorms. Often she told us that she never went to bed at Aunt Kate's house without a coffee can of biscuits beside her bed, in case she had to flee to the storm cellar in the night. Why Granny needed the biscuits I never knew. Those storms are over quickly. Our court storm never broke, but I was still apprehensive of the political storm clouds.

In those years we met the problems as they presented



themselves. Each one was but a forerunner of another.

In a clipping from *The San Antonio Light*, of October 12, 1932, I find I made a plea to voters to cast a straight Democratic vote. In referring to the past summer's campaign, I said:

"They poured it on us, and we poured it on them. Now that my mother is to be the candidate for governor, we still need your support."

Mamma and Daddy worked day and night through the month of December, interviewing and discussing prospective appointees for Mamma's new administration. Judge Ray Starnes tells the story that he walked into their office one morning to find the ex-governor and the incoming governor in hot debate. Daddy was enthusiastically sponsoring a certain man for a certain office. With flowery encomiums he extolled his friend's qualifications for the post.

"Yes," Mamma retorted, "he may have all the qualifications in the world, but he drinks liquor and runs around with wild women; and I'll not have him in my official family! Would you, Ray?"

Daddy listened to her little tirade until she ran down and then, in a soft voice, said:

"Now, Mamma, quit shooting birds out of season. We are not governor yet!"

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## CHAPTER XXI

# **The Fourth Ferguson Administration**

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THE November general election over and won, by a 208,000 majority, the fourth Ferguson inauguration day came on the second Tuesday in January 1933. This time there was no courtly Pat Neff to present the "first lady" to the people.

Governor Sterling did not remain in Austin to take part in the inauguration ceremonies as had invariably been the custom for outgoing governors to do. He left the Capitol and the Mansion without a word to anyone; nor did he, in the tradition set by Pat Neff and followed ever since, mark a passage in the Bible to lighten his successor's darkness.

The sojourns of the Fergusons in the Governor's Mansion had now become so regular that the experience had lost its zest. Mamma and Daddy moved to the Mansion with little more than they would take for a week's stay at a hotel. Dor-race and her husband remained in the Ferguson home at 1500 Windsor Road and we three Nalles at 1003 Rio Grande Street.

No sooner had the Governor resumed her desk than the poor devils in the penitentiary started their pleas for freedom, not only to her but to every member of the Ferguson family.

In this connection there were many fresh pleas from convicts whose records were well known to the Governor from her last administration. The Governor granted clemency to many whom she thought deserving. To those short-term men, with good prison records, who had been liquor law



violators, she opened wide the gates. These pardons the enemy newspapers played up in scareheads accusing the Fergusons of exposing the citizens of Texas to a loosed rabble of murderers and thieves. For carrying out humanely the letter and spirit of the parole and pardon provisions of the law, the Governor was called almost everything short of gangster. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. Every pardon granted was the result of careful study of the case. In no instance did Miriam A. Ferguson grant clemency to a convict without the approval of the Board of Pardons.

The pardon plea I remember most vividly of those in 1933 was made for the old Mexican General Rangel. I had seen the General on one of my trips to the penitentiary; when I heard at the Capitol one day that his son and his daughter were appearing before the Governor and the Board I remained for the hearing.

Delegations of Anglo-American citizens from Brownsville and Laredo had come up from the border to oppose clemency for Rangel. It would have been perfectly natural and easy to have dropped the case, but Fergusons have no racial prejudice. There was a day when voters of Mexican blood along the border outnumbered by far the American stock, but that was no longer true in 1933. Slick political tactics would have dictated bowing to those delegations and letting Rangel die in prison.

General Rangel, then past eighty, had served nearly twenty years for marauding raids along the lower Rio Grande. His children, respected American citizens, certainly were entitled to a hearing.

In perfect English a daughter made the plea that her father had paid the penalty for any crime of which he might have been guilty. "He is almost totally blind," she said. "He cannot work; he is a burden on the state. If you will turn him over to me I will assume full responsibility for him. He cannot live many years. To have him die a free man will be a comfort to his children who are law-abiding United States citizens." Her plea made a deep impression on me.

A son spoke next. He wore the uniform of the United States Army, in which he had served a number of years with

credit. His plea for clemency for his old father was equally strong, simple and logical.

On the other side of the picture was the impressive protest from those who had suffered at the hands of Rangel and his followers. Here was a knotty problem and one over which the Governor and the Board of Pardons deliberated at great length. In the last analysis, the General's advanced years, his blindness, the fact that he had served twenty years for his crime, and the appeals of his children won his pardon. The Governor and the Board of Pardons considered that his debt to society had been paid. For this humane action the Fergusons, of course, were bitterly criticized.

There have been many tales told and much propaganda circulated about how Mexicans and Negroes are oppressed and suppressed in the South and Southwest. Of one thing I am positive: these people have always received the same consideration from the Fergusons as has our own race. My mother felt deeply the responsibility of her oath of office. At all times she strove to deal fairly with minority groups.

The Governor was severely criticized for her liberal pardoning policy. Perhaps, in her zeal to be fair, she sometimes erred on the side of leniency, but I think all must agree that it is far better to err on the side of leniency than in the other direction. Put yourself in her shoes and ask yourself: "What would I have done in that particular case?"

Miriam A. Ferguson's enemies picture her as one who did not strive to carry out her oath of office in upholding the laws of the state. I know her. I was there through both of her administrations. Whenever the Governor felt that justice had been dealt out by the courts, she could be as hard as any man placed in her position. She is the most positive and strongest-minded woman I have ever known; and I have been in public life with the Fergusons of Texas more than twenty-five years. Where anyone ever got the idea that Mamma is pliable is beyond my imagining.

I remember one case in particular where she demonstrated her will to do what she conceived to be right. A premeditated murder had been committed. A Mexican had ambushed and killed his rival in love, and had pled guilty. The Mexican consul who was stationed at San Antonio



urged that the condemned man's sentence be commuted to life imprisonment. Father José Prieto, a Spanish priest in Austin and a good friend of mine, joined the consul in asking that the death sentence be set aside. I have many good friends among the Latin American population. I felt that if the consul and Father Prieto judged the penalty to be too harsh it was my duty to add my voice to theirs.

Repeatedly the consul would shake his head and say:

"If your mother could only understand Latin passion she would see this case in an entirely different light."

I discussed the case at great length with Mamma in private. To my arguments her final reply was:

"Latin passion or no Latin passion, a jury and a judge have found him guilty of premeditated murder. He has pled guilty. The court says he must die for his crime. I consider it my duty to uphold the findings of the court unless I can see just cause to set aside the verdict. I do not consider Latin passion a just cause. As hard as it is to let a man die, I see no alternative in this case."

This sealed his doom and Mamma and Daddy lived through another of those terrible nights when there is an electrocution at Huntsville.

On the other side of the picture: I walked into the Governor's office one morning just in time to see her hand a pardon to the wife of a man who had been sent up for two years for making beer. The wife was twice Mamma's size. She threw her arms around the frail Governor in a bear hug that took Her Excellency's breath. Her broken English lapsed into German as she wept hysterically. Then Mamma's tears began to flow. In the clutches of this great strong woman she was helpless. The woman hugged her and kissed her face and hands, crooning and sobbing endearments in German. It would have been ludicrous had it not been so sad.

Pardon seekers were always with us, as they are with every governor, but there were more than usual in Mamma's second administration because in her campaign for office she had answered the critics of her 1925-26 pardonings by advocating a liberal pardoning policy for 1933-34. Governor Sterling had trimmed his sails to the prevailing wind, blowing against the Ferguson pardons when he had been elected.

Our enemies never lost an opportunity to cast an aspersion on Jim Ferguson. When President Roosevelt was inaugurated in March the enemy started the story that the reason Mamma didn't go to the inauguration was that Daddy did not receive an invitation. As a matter of fact, he was perhaps the only private citizen in the United States who received a special governor's invitation. Addressed to him personally, his name was inscribed in the body of the invitation.

Miriam A. Ferguson's second administration opened in the trough of the economic depression.

Through January and February, Texas bankers felt increasing alarm at the probability of a general run on banks. Everybody was asking, "What is going to happen and what can be done about the situation?"

The moneyed interests have never supported the Fergusons. This one time they came to Austin seeking Ferguson help. We knew from that how bad things must be.

Runs on the banks in the Eastern states were closing bank doors by the dozens. Our Texas bankers, ears to the ground, were whispering, "Will the panic spread west?"

Daddy heard that an East St. Louis bank had closed after a run. Desiring to gain further information, he telephoned a banker friend in that city. The danger of discussing the banking situation even on the telephone made him guarded in his conversation. In parables he put his question: "Is the wind blowing in St. Louis?" The banker caught the meaning and replied: "There is a strong wind from the East and in fact it has already blown over one house." Daddy then asked whether he thought the storm would continue west. The reply was in the affirmative.

The panic was on; it was nation-wide. Bank executives knew that if the banks were not closed by law public hysteria would break every bank in the country. Quiet runs had already started in our Texas cities and jittery bankers feared what the next hour might bring.

The Governor, even though she was a hated Ferguson, could save their bacon. So many bankers came to Austin that it would be easier to list those who did not come than those who did.

It was amusing to watch Daddy. He did enjoy heaping



coals of fire on the heads of those who had always opposed him. The Fergusons held trump cards now. Revenge and ruin were in their hands. I suppose some of these frightened bankers really wondered whether Jim Ferguson would rise above personal feeling and save them and the banking system of our state.

The second day of March is Independence Day in Texas. On that date in 1836 our fighting forefathers declared their independence of Mexico and its dictator, Santa Anna. Banks are all closed on this state holiday. That lucky break gave the Governor time to telephone orders all over the state without causing a run on banks. All day long the word went out that no bank in Texas was to open its doors on Friday morning, March 3.

Again, Texas had been first! Two days later the national bank holiday was declared by the President of the United States.

The Texas legislature met a few days later to enact a law authorizing the banking commissioner to open banks under certain conditions, and with certain restrictions. Some banks could never reopen, but a general panic had been averted.

My young son, George, Jr., now thirteen years old, had dined with his grandparents in the Governor's Mansion on March 1, and was told by them in confidence that the banks were to be closed. When the closing came, I was caught without a penny. When I scolded George, Jr., for not warning me he gave me the male look reserved for irresponsible women and children.

"It was told me in confidence, and you have always taught me never to betray a confidence," he informed me. I am still proud of his answer to me.

National prohibition, which President Hoover had called not a noble experiment, but an experiment noble in purpose, had not brought the temperance that many had thought it would bring. The American people were demanding a change.

The Reverend J. Frank Norris of Fort Worth, Texas, challenged Daddy to debate the prohibition question with him in Austin on Monday, June 26, the day prior to the "Wet and Dry" convention. Daddy accepted the challenge.

Reverend Norris promised to arrange the meeting at Wooldridge Park and to provide loud speakers for the occasion. When we arrived at the park there were no loud speakers. In wild turmoil George and I started scouting for some form of amplification. George finally located one over the telephone. It was owned by a restaurant on the other side of the river. Without delay he procured the apparatus and hooked it up on the speaker's stand at Wooldridge Park. The debate was a bit late in getting started, but everybody could hear the speeches. I am positive that not a vote was changed on either side. However, it was a good show for the tremendous crowd that had turned out to hear these two vitriolic speakers argue for their respective sides of the burning question.

On June 27 the "Drys" met in the Texas Senate Chamber with Senator Morris Sheppard, author of the National Prohibition Amendment, as their leader; the "Wets" met in Gregory Gymnasium, on the campus of the University of Texas, with a disputed leadership.

Jim Ferguson's friends were proposing his name for the chairmanship of the convention. Joseph Weldon Bailey, Jr., son of Senator Bailey, opposed him; the presumption was that young Bailey wanted the chairmanship himself.

In a bombastic speech of praise of the Ferguson administrations young Joe Bailey argued that, while Jim Ferguson had done much for Texas, at the same time he bore the stigma of impeachment.

"If the Ferguson supporters succeed in electing Jim Ferguson chairman of this convention, I'll withdraw and hold a rump convention, in order that there may be no doubt as to the legal eligibility of the chairman," Bailey shouted.

"Young Joe" had previously stated that the impeachment, in his opinion, was unfair and illegal. His motives were now clearly understood. He was now exhuming the old impeachment skeleton to further his own ambitions; this infuriated the Ferguson supporters. Jim had a clear majority and Bailey knew it. His tactics made our friends only the more determined.

Daddy and I were seated to the left of the platform. The Governor was not there; she was a sincere prohibitionist, both by precept and by practice. Our friends were on their



feet, huddled around us, urging Daddy to stand pat and accept the chairmanship. I had another idea.

Here I digress briefly. If I have appeared immodest in this dissertation; if I have injected too much of myself into the story of the Fergusons and have claimed any credit for the accomplishments of my parents, I am in error, and perhaps should be reproved. I always gave them advice, and freely, since they never asked me for it. Indeed, it was their practice to sit on me and squelch me every time I raised my voice. They never considered my advice worth taking. This, however, never dampened my ardor. I felt no resentment toward them for ignoring my opinions, because I realized their problems full well. If they had not kept me down I would gladly have been governor; and three governors for the price of one would have been one too many! Nevertheless, I claim full credit for the strategy employed at that "Wet" convention in Gregory Gymnasium, in March 1933.

When Joe Bailey, Jr., dug up the old bone of contention, impeachment, I turned to Daddy and said, wrathfully:

"You don't want that chairmanship! Why don't you beat that young spud at his own game by nominating Charlie McDonald and turning your support to him?"

This brought a jumble of protests from the Ferguson friends in the huddle around Daddy. Daddy didn't reply to me.

Bailey continued to orate, and again I put my hand firmly on Daddy's knee and commanded:

"Go on! Get up and nominate Charlie!"

But still "Bre'r Rabbit say nothin'."

Over the protest of Charlie McDonald and all the other friends I urged Daddy the third time. This drew his fire. "Keep quiet!" he ordered me. I wrinkled my nose at him and turned and looked the other way.

When Young Joe Bailey sat down, my unpredictable parent arose and nominated Charlie McDonald! Charlie got the chair and the gavel.

As we say in Texas, "Young Bailey had worked a little too wide on the axle," after which the wheel falls off. Joe's father had been a great crusader against prohibition, and none would have been happier than I to see his son made

chairman of the "Wet" convention had he not turned on Jim Ferguson.

Charlie McDonald, an attorney, and one of Texas' most colorful public men, relinquished the gavel, and for a half hour addressed the convention in language typical of the sarcasm for which only McDonald was famed. He excoriated the "Drys" in vitriolic terms for the curse prohibition had brought upon this country. The speech was so hot it could only have been written on asbestos. Resuming the chair, he pushed through in rapid fashion a resolution condemning prohibition, and demanding its repeal. The convention then adjourned.

Since March, National and State politics had become increasingly inter-related. With the advent of a Democrat in the White House, and a Texan in the office of Vice President, Texas was in the money. There was much business being done between Washington and Austin. There were many differences to be ironed out.

Daddy made a trip to Washington the first week in July 1933, accompanied by Charlie McDonald and Colonel Lawrence Westbrook, State Relief Administrator for Texas. This triumvirate called on the President, pledging their support of prohibition repeal, which, at the time, was a burning issue. After a thirty minutes' conference with the Chief Executive, they then called on all State Department heads.

Jed Adams, of Texas, had resigned his place on the National Democratic Executive Committee and Daddy was supporting his friend, Charlie McDonald, to succeed Adams. The state's National Committeeman is the titular head of the party. This office draws as much water, perhaps, as does the governor's office when the national administration is Democratic. The press accounts of that date state that Jim Farley refused to accept Adams' resignation when Ferguson insisted upon Charlie McDonald for the place. Farley was cordial, but noncommittal when Daddy called on him in Washington. But more about that later.

With Harry Hopkins, then National Relief Administrator, Daddy and Colonel Westbrook took up the question of Federal aid for relief in Texas. Mr. Hopkins made it clear that advances to Texas for relief would stop unless bonds



were passed or means provided to match three dollars for every dollar put up by the Federal Government. Daddy promised the full cooperation of the Governor in helping to pass what later became known in Texas as the "Bread Bonds."

At the time of Daddy's visit to Washington, the legislature, on July 10, passed a bill submitting twenty million dollars in bonds for relief to a special election to be held on August 26. Daddy returned to Texas determined to throw his full strength into a speaking campaign urging passage of the bonds. From the Red River to the Rio Grande he spoke in every town and hamlet. Relief bonds and repeal of prohibition became a religion to him.

On August 23, just three days prior to the special election, Harry Hopkins, accompanied by Dr. Aubrey Williams, flew to Austin to assist in the campaign.

Speaking over the radio at a banquet at the Driskill Hotel, where one hundred and fifty guests had gathered, Mr. Hopkins warned: "The Federal Government has no intention of continuing to pay 95 per cent of the Texas relief bill after the bond election on Saturday; but it stands ready to go over halfway in a partnership with the State." Mamma attended the banquet and introduced the speaker. Daddy was speaking in another part of the state that evening. After the banquet Mamma and a small group adjourned to a radio to hear Daddy speaking from Tyler. After urging passage of the "Bread Bonds" Daddy turned to the prohibition question. He stated he did not favor return of the open saloon, but said, "The old saloon keeper was a saint compared to the bootlegger."

The "Bread Bonds" were passed by a comfortable majority, and Texas ratified the repeal of prohibition.

On the following day Mamma said in an interview with the press: "My husband had an important part in this election; I never saw him more interested in any campaign. I am pleased beyond measure with the results."

After these bonds were printed the Governor spent days and nights signing each bond. This great physical undertaking, together with other official duties gave her a severe

cramping in her arm that lasted for months after the job was completed.

Our lives were not all struggle and battle: we had lots of pleasure as well. Life in the governor's entourage in Texas is never dull. Indeed, these last four words can stand alone: *Texas is never dull.*

The Governor supported and signed a bill legalizing pari mutuel betting on horse races. The Waggoner track, Arlington Downs, midway between Fort Worth and Dallas, had been built for a number of years. When betting was legalized, the track was reopened on October 18, 1933, with a bang. John N. Garner and Chip Roberts, as well as other officials from Washington, including Jim Farley, attended the opening.

Will Rogers was there, and in a spot that would have been awkward for anybody but Will. He was the guest of Amon Carter, the Fort Worth publisher. Carter was standing outside of the celebration like a dogie out of the herd, because he hated the Fergusons.

The night of the big racing banquet in Dallas, Will Rogers lassoed Carter and literally dragged him into the banquet hall. Carter was obviously embarrassed. Will eased his embarrassment by introducing him to Mamma publicly, and telling them he wanted them to be friends.

The race track meet next completed, and opened with much fanfare on Thursday, November 30, 1933, was Epsom Downs, outside Houston. The Ferguson clan attended en masse. Out Main street, behind screaming police sirens, we traveled at breakneck speed. When we arrived at the track our nerves were quivering. My young son called the Governor to one side and gave her, what was, I hope, his first political advice.

"Grandmother," he said, "I hope you will ask them to drive slower going back. Sending people scampering to cover with those sirens is poor psychology. Such display is un-American."

George, Jr., talked that way at fourteen. The Governor agreed with him. We returned to Houston quietly and at a much slower gait.

Jim Ferguson loved the ponies; he would bet his last dol-



lar on a long shot. He never won at any of these racing fiestas, and we were in constant fear that one of his long shots would come in and out would come a screaming headline in one of the moralist journals:

"CROOKS PAY OFF BIG TO JIM!"

"Jim," in Texas headlines still meant only one *Jim*!

Daddy's constant losses at the track gave his fourteen-year-old grandson no little worry. A good Scot, and naturally conservative, George, Jr., actually suffered as he sat by and watched his grandfather pick the wrong ponies at Houston. Finally, in desperation, and much to the amusement of those around us, he turned to me with the plea:

"Can't you do anything with your parent? Why don't you take his purse away from him?"

Later, we asked George, Jr., whether or not he wanted to go the opening of Alamo Downs on April 24, 1934, at San Antonio. By now, he was down on Downs!

"No!" he said. "Definitely no! I had all I could stand watching Grandfather lose his money in Houston, and then hearing him come home crying hard times and the country is going to the devil!"

Jim Farley had refused to accept Jed Adams' resignation as National Committeeman in the late spring of 1933, and it was not until March 1934 that it was accepted. In the beginning, Daddy supported C. C. McDonald for the post.

It is a matter of unwritten history — in fact, unknown history — to most people in Texas that C. C. McDonald received a two-thirds vote of the State Committee to make him National Committeeman when Adams' resignation was accepted. McDonald never served because, by the time Jed Adams' resignation was accepted, Daddy and Charlie McDonald had hatched another political scheme. McDonald announced himself as candidate for governor to succeed Miriam A. Ferguson.

When the State Executive Committee met in Houston on March 24, 1934, to fill the vacant post, James E. Ferguson was elected. John Bickett, Jr., of San Antonio, in a flowery speech nominating Daddy, described him as "The noblest Roman of them all." Young John's father had been my

father's lifelong friend, and when Daddy heard of John, Jr.'s speech as we sat in the Governor's suite at the Lamar Hotel, the color rose in his face. Then he turned ashen white, his eyes filled, and we realized he was deeply touched.

Daddy's election to this office in the party was a considerable blow to some of the old Ferguson enemies. Various emissaries began coming to Daddy with the story that John Garner would like to be National Committeeman from Texas. Their scheme was easily understood. They thought, of course, that Daddy would fight to hold the post and thus place the Governor's husband in the light of standing in the way of the Vice President's national prestige. They did not know Daddy! In the columns of *The Ferguson Forum* he had been the first to suggest John Nance Garner for the Presidency.

"If Garner will agree to serve, I'll resign in order that the State Executive Committee can elect him," Daddy told Garner's friends. He immediately started trying to reach Garner in Washington by long distance telephone. When the operator was not able to complete the call in twenty-four hours, Daddy wired the Vice President that he would resign provided Garner would agree to serve.

Garner answered immediately, stating that he would accept if elected National Committeeman.

On September 5, 1934, Daddy resigned as Democratic National Committeeman from Texas.

On September 10, 1934, the State Executive Committee met in Galveston, and elected John Nance Garner to fill the vacancy made by the resignation of James E. Ferguson. Thus, the incident was closed, and all was harmonious.

I have spoken before in this story of the many interesting and famous people who visited the Fergusons, both at the Mansion and at the office of the Governor in the Capitol building. A Chinese couple were the most exotic guests during that last administration. The husband wore a conventional business suit, while his wife's costume was typically Chinese, with a flat, band collar. Her gown, made pillow-slip fashion, was slit up both sides of the skirt to her knees. Her American shoes were the only deviation from an otherwise Oriental dress. As I recall it, the name of the visitors was Wu.



They were quaint and quite demure, yet they had acquired a Westerner's interest in politics, and especially in women in politics.

Mrs. Wu brought Mamma a gold Chinese pin, designed in three horizontal circles or balls. The center ball of jade, a design used exclusively in Chinese art, signifies the ball of life. The two outer circles are gold, and bear the Chinese inscription: "*Health, Wealth and Happiness.*"

On Sunday, November 25, 1934, Daddy wrote in his diary:

The Legislature adjourned about two weeks ago after passing three important bills at the request of the Governor. They are:

- (1) Improvement of the Brazos River.
- (2) The completion of the Buchanan dam on the Colorado River.
- (3) The remission of interest and penalty on delinquent taxes.

My wife's second administration is drawing to a close, with the near unanimous approval of people everywhere. I am wondering what I will find to do when my wife goes out of office next January 15, 1935.

I am still in debt and don't know whether I will pull out or not. The depression is still on the country. All that can be done is to bide the time with patience and trust in Providence.

November 27, 1934, was my son's fifteenth birthday. To celebrate the occasion I gave him a dinner party at the Mansion. His great-grandmother Sampson had been the first bride of the Governor's Mansion, some sixty-five years before. Out of family sentiment I used the flat silver that had been among her wedding presents, and a tablecloth that she had embroidered with her own hands during a four-year's sojourn abroad while her daughters were being educated. The banquet cloth, five yards long, had never been used; there had never been a table in the family long enough for it, nor was the table in the Mansion long enough. I had a carpenter make an extension in the shape of a crescent, which we

latched on to one rounded end of the Mansion table. In this way we were able to christen the cloth that had been packed away for fifty years. Twenty youngsters gathered around this truly sumptuous board. I have often thought how happy Granny Sampson would have been to have looked in on her great-grandson's birthday party.

Mamma's social swan song at the Mansion was her regular New Year's "open house" on January 1, 1935. This last Ferguson reception at the Mansion was an exceptionally pleasant affair. Mamma had not made the race to succeed herself; consequently, the party was not colored with political regret. Some three hundred people called in a spirit of friendliness to celebrate the day and wish us well. This "open house" at the Governor's Mansion on New Year's Day had been a custom for a long time.

As the last Ferguson administration drew to a close Mamma spent busy days putting the office and the Mansion in order for her successor, the young James V. Allred, a lawyer of Wichita Falls, Texas. He had been a former attorney-general of Texas. Allred had defeated Tom Hunter in the run-off.

Jimmie Allred chose to break the tradition of having the out-going governor present the incoming governor at the inauguration. Gossip in the Capitol had it that Jimmie was afraid of what the woman governor might say of him.

Former Governor Pat M. Neff, always a stickler for custom and tradition, sat behind Mamma at the ceremonies, and expressed himself freely at this discourtesy offered Governor Miriam A. Ferguson. Mamma didn't mind.

In the Bible in the governor's office she followed the tradition of marking a passage of Scripture for Jimmie Allred, the new governor of Texas. She marked the 32nd verse of the 50th chapter of Jeremiah, which reads:

*And the proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up; and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all around about him.*

Once more the keys to the governor's office and to the Governor's Mansion were turned over to a successor in office. Dorrace and I literally breathed a long sigh of relief,



as our parents once again became plain Mr. and Mrs. James Edward Ferguson, of Texas. In unison we pledged to each other: "Never again — *we hope!*"

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## CHAPTER XXII

### **“We Do Not Choose”**

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ON JANUARY 24, 1935, Daddy wrote in his diary, among other things:

I do not think the depression will be over for a year, and conditions may get worse. . . . I am now past 63, and I realize that my days of physical activity cannot, in the natural order of things, be prolonged to any great extent. . . . I am philosophical about the situation, and I do not worry much about what comes or goes, because it would do no good.

On Sunday, May 12, 1935, Daddy continued to write in his diary:

This is ‘Mother’s Day,’ and the usual celebration and notice is being observed in the papers and churches. The day ought to be more religiously observed. The homes and families of the country are breaking down because of the lack of devotion to the motherhood of the country. As a result, our civilization is reaching a low grade of morals. . . .

This little sermon, written in his diary, and not seen by any other eyes but his until after Daddy’s death, was evidently just a little of the “Old Parson Ferguson” cropping out in him.



On June 17, 1935, he wrote:

Economic conditions appear to grow worse. The Supreme Court of the United States has recently held the N.R.A. unconstitutional, and a feeling of unrest and uncertainty seems to pervade the whole nation. The President is being criticized in many places and for many things. His power seems to be waning, but he is still popular with the masses. . . . I am still struggling with adversity and debts. . . . The state has recently had excessive rains and floods; they have caused much damage to houses and crops. The Colorado river here in Austin rose fifty feet, the highest in its history.

In January, 1935, the Ferguson team, known to the world as "Ma and Pa," retired from the governor's office undefeated. Together, they had been honored four times with the high office of Governor of the State of Texas.

There were many who urged them to run again in 1934; but in the language of another blunt American, they said: "We do not choose to run."

In the family there was great rejoicing. Public life lays a heavy burden on the children of those who hold high office. We were "be-damned if we did and be-damned if we didn't." My heart goes out to every son and daughter of a famous or near-famous person.

If either Ferguson daughter made a mistake she was the target of merciless censure; if she performed a task well, it was passed off lightly, with a remark that she had had the help of able parents!

I once declined an invitation to make a radio talk. I declined because of other important work I had to do, leaving me no time to prepare a script. The well-meaning friend who was extending the invitation replied: "That's no excuse; you know your father will be glad to write your script for you." Them was fightin' words!

Always I discussed with Daddy the things I was interested in, and what I was doing. I valued his advice and liked to get his slant on every question. But never in my life did he write a speech for me, or even suggest how I should present my subject. Daddy's presence in my audience never im-

proved my talk. I knew he would criticize me later, and freely. The last time he ever came to hear me speak, which was in 1938, he grabbed his hat and dashed off at the close of my talk without coming up to speak to me. I knew I was in bad with him! Believing that an offensive is always the best defense, I started scolding him first.

"Why did you leave my meeting without showing me the courtesy of coming up to speak to me? As many times as I have had to listen to you — in town after town — make practically the same speech! I never failed to join the pep squad that rallied around you at the close of the meeting! You literally ran out on me!"

Daddy sat in silence for a second, then said:

"After that story you told about interviewing a eunuch in China, I was so embarrassed I felt like sneaking out the back door!"

My mother's reaction to the story was directly the opposite. She said:

"We read of eunuchs in history books and the Bible. We put them in the faraway past; we do not realize that a remnant of these creatures of the dark ages still live. Your talk was most interesting and enlightening to me. I saw nothing in any of it to shock your father."

There you have two characteristics of the Fergusons of Texas.

When the summer of 1936 brought another campaign, the old-line Ferguson supporters strongly urged Mamma to enter the governor's race, but again she declined. This time she supported her friend, Roy Sanderford, of Belton, against Governor Allred. The campaign years when we supported a friend and did not have a Ferguson in the race were far less strenuous than were the other biennial bursts of politics.

I particularly recall one funny incident of the 1936 campaign. Daddy was to speak in San Antonio and Corpus Christi for Sanderford. George and I offered to drive him to his speaking dates. Things went beautifully in San Antonio. The following morning, on the way to Corpus Christi, we stopped in Beeville. While the gasoline tank was being filled I went to the restroom. When I came out, George, Daddy



and the car had vanished down the concrete ribbon on the vast coastal plain.

The filling station man suggested that I catch the bus for Corpus Christi, which was coming through in a few minutes.

"But I have no money! I left my purse in the car," I protested, laughing.

The filling station man didn't find the situation so amusing. In fact, he didn't like it one bit, being left with a strange woman on his doorstep by two men who evidently wanted to get rid of her! The longer I waited, the funnier I thought it, and the more panicky the man became. It didn't seem to help when I told him who I was, with the hope of borrowing bus fare to Corpus forty miles away. All my identification papers were in the purse in the car.

About ten miles down the road George and Daddy took the fork on the highway south to Alice instead of the one to Corpus Christi. Discovering their mistake, they actually came back to the fork and were fifteen miles down the road to Corpus before they discovered that I was not in the back seat. At frantic speed, scanning the ditches for me, George drove back to Beeville. It was a sheepish-looking pair that rolled up to the filling station.

"Not only wife desertion, but child desertion," I accused them. We laughed until we cried. The filling station man decided it was safe to laugh, too.

Of course we were late to our luncheon engagement in Corpus Christi, and you may be sure I told why. It was dashing to my political pride, I said, to discover how unimportant I was, after all these years. But never again could they accuse me of being a back-seat driver.

We worked hard that summer of 1936 to elect our man, Sanderford. George and I hauled Daddy in our car from as far west as San Angelo, to Corpus Christi in the south, making one-night stands only. We had fun because Daddy was always so jolly and talkative on motor trips. We never went through a small town that he didn't tell us some funny story about something that had happened to him there in a previous campaign. Nor did he always confine his stories and reminiscences to his own experiences. Always a student of

history, he loved to recite the colorful tales of places famous during certain periods of our state's history.

When Roy Sanderford spoke that year in Austin, I gave a tea for his wife, to which I invited 350 guests. I had known her as Thetis Campbell when we went to school together in Temple as children and later to Baylor as young ladies. This tea party started the old gossips' tongues wagging. Of course I admit I didn't expect the party to lose Roy Sanderford any votes; on the other hand, it was not entirely a political trick as some insinuated.

Roy Sanderford was defeated and time marched on.

The summer of 1938 offered another opportunity to seek the governor's chair. In mass meetings at San Antonio, Dallas and Houston our friends organized. Long petitions and hundreds of telegrams from influential persons all over the state came in, urging Mamma to run again.

"Draft Ma," was their slogan; a fine tribute, deeply appreciated.

Mamma issued a statement expressing her sincere gratitude to her friends, stating that she owed a great debt to the people of Texas because they had honored her family with high office more times than any other family in the state, but that, while she and her husband would always be interested in the public welfare, she felt that there were others who should carry on in office.

The one who carried on was a dark horse — not dark for long — W. Lee O'Daniel of Fort Worth, a Yankee by birth, a flour salesman who advertised his wares over the radio with a hillbilly band and a theme song: "*Pass the Biscuits, Pappy.*" He received a majority in the first primary.

On August 4, 1939, Dorrace bore her first child, the second Ferguson grandson. Like a good Ferguson she chose an off-year, politically. A year later and he would have arrived between first primary and the run-off, but there didn't prove to be any that year.

"Almost twenty years between our grandsons," Daddy remarked to Mamma as he entered James Stuart Watt's name in the family Bible. What greater joy and blessing could befall these two? A baby always brings new life and



rejuvenation to the grandparents. Another heir to carry on the family line, though not the name of Ferguson.

The summer of 1939 seemed extremely warm to the Fergusons. The Ewell Nalle Building where Daddy had his office was not air-conditioned. We conceived the idea that it would be nice to put an air-conditioning unit in Daddy's office. We reasoned that anyone weighing 230 pounds should certainly be put on ice in Texas in the summertime. It was to be a surprise. We went to considerable trouble to arrange all the details relative to installation in order that he would be inconvenienced as little as possible. We got permission from Ewell Nalle to put it in his building; arranged for the necessary extra heavy wire from the elevator to Daddy's office. Everything was set for the presentation of what we thought would be a most welcome and appreciated gift. We were wrong; Daddy refused to have it in his office.

"It will block up too much of my window, and besides, my friend Jerome Sneed, who is just down the hall, doesn't have air-conditioning," he told us.

We explained and argued with him that Jerome Sneed was twenty-odd years his junior, and weighed at least seventy-five pounds less than he. But my parent would not be reconciled to air-conditioning. He flatly refused to accept our gift! There was Jim Ferguson for you! Frankly, I think he was afraid Jerome Sneed and his other neighbors in the building would think him a sissy if he had an air-conditioned office.

The years strung out, and the Fergusons continued to meet situations as they developed. Ludicrous, as well as serious, requests were made of them. Daddy was asked to play the part of a senator in a Little Theater play!

Following close on that request came the urgent plea of the widow of an old friend. Her husband had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Fergusons.

"Will Governor Jim come preach his funeral?" was the widow's entreaty over long distance telephone to Daddy's secretary. Daddy declined, but went to the funeral. "Actor, preacher — what next!" Daddy mused.

As time is reckoned, Texas is young. Little more than a hundred years ago our forefathers wrested this state from

Mexico. But like the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, we have begun to preserve our records and our culture. Not in tombs, but in college museums. The Daughters of the American Revolution presented to the Texas State College for Women at Denton, Texas, a collection of historic costumes to be preserved for posterity. In this collection is the shell pink, heavily beaded gown that Mamma wore to her first inaugural ball in 1925.

For the first time a blessed peace seemed to be settling over our family. Enemies of a lifetime were becoming friendly; some were even beginning to give the Fergusons credit for the things they had accomplished.

In the *State Observer* of September 18, 1939, appeared an article by Odie Minatra, who, for twenty years had opposed the Fergusons politically. The title of the article is "*Old Jim.*" I quote:

Nature requires a million years to make a man or a mountain. Old Jim Ferguson, embattled for half a generation, and marked by the scars of conflict, is a man. . . .

'Farmer Jim' grows old gracefully. He is philosophic, rotund and reconciled. His farms, friends and *Forum* fill the lengthening years. The Old Master is inscrutable and enigmatic, but drawn instinctively and magnetically to the vortex of politics.

A graying Eagle, from his Austin home or the Capitol galleries, he watches, tolerant and amused, the recurring Texas scenes. 'Old Jim' adorns Texas.

Many of our former enemies felt that way about Daddy.

Rumblings were heard of another move to expunge the Senate records of the Ferguson impeachment proceedings, once again, and for all time. Our friends had contended for this action ever since the Amnesty bill, passed in Miriam A. Ferguson's first administration, was rescinded. It now appeared that the old enemies were willing to right the injustice they had done the man, Jim Ferguson, and his



family. That gesture would have been of great comfort to Mamma and Daddy.

After all, why should the Fergusons expect it? Neither James Stephen Hogg nor General Sam Houston was appreciated until after each was dead!

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### **She Runs Again**

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EARLY in March Daddy indicated to me that he would like to try some kind of hearing device that might help him to hear better. I made an appointment with the audiphone representative in San Antonio for an examination. For a number of years George and I had been urging Daddy to try one of the devices, but he had always turned his deaf ear to our suggestions.

"What has come over him?" I asked George. "Why the sudden change in attitude toward an earphone?"

As Daddy and I waited in front of the Nalle Building for George to pick us up and take us to San Antonio, I ventured this remark to Daddy:

"Isn't all this recent ballyhoo in the papers about Mamma's running for governor the most ridiculous thing in the world?"

"Not so ridiculous as you might think!" Daddy retorted.

I leaned on a postbox and tried to recover from the blow. Another campaign, another battle! I saw stars at the thought of what it meant!

Articles in the daily press continued to stress the great need for the Fergusons in the governor's office. Every mail brought hundreds of letters urging Mamma's candidacy.

Seeking office is a disease. Once an individual has had his hat in the political arena, there is a recurring urge every two years to run again. This is true of everybody who has held office, whether or not they admit the fact. As an in-



stance, there is the case of ex-Governor Dan Moody, of Texas, in the spring of 1940. Some of his friends filed his name for a place on the ticket. He considered long and hard whether to enter the race. It was not until the last minutes of the Executive Committee's meeting, where names are certified, that Governor Moody decided not to run.

When the question of Mamma's running again was discussed in the family circle I would tease Daddy: "You are a cross between Cincinnatus and a retired firehorse. Like Cincinnatus, you believe all these letters and telegrams are calling you from the plow, and combined with that biennial ring of the political firebell, you, like the retired firehorse, feel it is your duty to respond to the call."

I bitterly opposed my parents' entering the governor's race again. As I saw it, there was all to lose, and nothing to gain. I said: "Although you may win at the polls, you will, in the long run, lose by the hard work you'll be forced to do."

The matter was still under consideration when my husband and I left Texas late in March on a business trip to New York.

On April 12, George and I started home by way of Virginia and South Carolina. Before we left New York I received a letter from Mamma with a note at the end from Daddy:

We miss you terribly.

Roosevelt and Garner campaign getting hot. I think your Mother may announce next week. Looks like she has a fine chance.

Devotedly,

"DADDY"

In Charleston, South Carolina, on April 17, we bought a *Dallas News* of April 14. In the headlines on the front page we found that Mamma had again thrown her bonnet into the ring. I read aloud to George:

Austin, April 13 — The Ferguson family, four times governor of Texas, Saturday returned to the political field, and Mrs. Miriam A. Ferguson announced her third-term candidacy for governor.

Mrs. Ferguson declared her platform of support of a third term for Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt and cooperation of the state administration with him. A small gross receipts tax, adopted when the Fergusons abandoned their former support of the sales tax, was proposed as a method of financing and paying the state's social security obligations, so far met in part as to pensions and untouched as to other benefits.

Mrs. Ferguson's entry, strongly intimated a week ago, assured dynamic developments in this campaign. Just as the Fergusons have made precedents without number, and history in the past years, Mrs. Ferguson created a new precedent Saturday by making a third-term race for the office of governor. She is the first and only woman governor of Texas; her family the only husband-wife team that has held the governorship.

As I read on down the newspaper column George, the philosopher, interrupted:

"Well! 'Two governors for the price of one' was always a good slogan. Me for Ma!"

Several days later we were at home. In the month we had been away the Fergusons had started another chapter; no, not the Fergusons, for it was begun for them this time. They were drafted by letters from people over the state urging them to enter the race.

"If the people want her she is willing to serve them," Daddy told me. "For the first time we aren't fighting for the office; the office seeks the woman."

"*What cannot be cured must be endured,*" is an old adage. Accordingly, I made up my mind to "take it on the chin" and do all in my power to bring about Mamma's nomination.

While we were in New York, Daddy, Ed Clark, Mayor Tom Miller of Austin, and Mayor Maury Maverick of San Antonio took a swing through Texas together, speaking in behalf of Roosevelt for a third term. This was a big political mistake on Daddy's part. When I heard about it I chided Daddy:

"You dabbling in another race when Mamma is a candidate! And after all the scoldings you have given me about



running one's own race and keeping out of the other fellow's race!"

As it turned out, this speaking jaunt over Texas offended many of our friends who were opposed to the President.

In the language of Van Kennedy, a newspaper man who described Daddy as "Texas' Master of Rural English," my father launched forth into another speaking campaign.

The campaign grew warm, but it lacked that old time political fire of our past races. Daddy stuck to a dignified type of speech instead of his old vitriolic attacks on the enemy. As we would go from town to town various friends would pull me off to one side and lament the fact that Daddy's hearing had failed, and beg me to use all my influence to get Daddy to pour the hot shot on the enemy. I would repeat these conversations to Daddy later, but he would only say:

"This campaign is different from our other fights; we are not going to seek the office as we have done in the past. The office seeks the woman this time."

This might have been high-minded, noble and clean politics, but this "Pollyanna" business on the part of the Fergusons just didn't take with the people. After all, we are not very civilized. The public is cruel; they go to a political speaking to be entertained by the candidates as they tear each other limb from limb!

Time marches on, and as it marches it brings many changes. Like the change in women's dress, the fashion of campaigning had undergone a great change since the advent of the radio. The power of the press had lost its once great influence over the public mind. The masses no longer read as they used to do. Today, it is the power of the airways that makes public opinion.

Owing to a lack of funds to purchase time on the air, and also to Daddy's old-fashioned faith in a literature campaign, we cluttered the mails with records of Ferguson achievements, all of which probably went straight to the wastebaskets of the people.

As in past campaigns Mamma set forth a platform on which she stood for election.

(1) Miriam A. Ferguson would support Franklin D. Roosevelt for a third term for President.

(2) She proposed a tax of one-half of one per cent on gross income over \$5,000.

(3) She promised to reduce current operation of the State government by twenty-five million dollars.

(4) She promised to endeavor to remove the discrimination by business against persons who had reached the age of forty-five while they were yet burdened with the expense of rearing a family.

(5) As in the past, she said she would favor the reasonable demands of organized labor.

(6) She said she favored the co-operation of state and national aid to tenant farmers on liberal advances at low rates of interest to enable them to purchase homes.

(7) She declared herself in favor of liberal appropriations for the support of educational institutions, both common schools and institutions of higher learning. She said: "If we get our money's worth, let us buy all the education we can pay for."

In every speech Miriam A. Ferguson discussed at great length each plank in her platform. The question of taxation to pay the social security program was the paramount issue. Her opponents, Colonel Ernest O. Thompson and Harry Hines, favored a natural resource tax, while Governor W. Lee O'Daniel declared that the Ten Commandments were his platform, and that he would favor any workable tax program that the legislature proposed. All candidates were opposed to a sales tax. Miriam A. Ferguson had sales tax leanings, but abandoned the sales tax for the gross income tax when she announced her platform.

Of course, the Ten Commandments cannot be debated! Next to the popularity of the Ten Commandments, outside the city of Austin, there is nothing that so appeals to the people of Texas as an attack upon state departments and bureaus. W. Lee (Pappy) O'Daniel led a merciless attack on these state departments.

Religious emotion and fervor were the other winning cards that O'Daniel played with finesse. For thirty minutes every Sunday morning after he took office, he had preached and had had his hillbilly band sing religious songs over the



radio. Rarely had he failed on one of these broadcasts to sing to some dead relative who was then in Heaven. The great congregation of people who gathered at the Governor's Mansion each Sunday morning at 8:30 for these services were a sort of cult at that time in Texas. These meetings were non-denominational, and Governor O'Daniel closed each broadcast with the admonition to his public to go to the church of their choice. Governor Lee O'Daniel was the Aimee Semple McPherson of Texas.

The governor's race in the summer of 1940 lacked the fire of former Ferguson campaigns. It was too dignified to attract the public. It was only in the closing days of the heat, and after strong appeals from our supporters, that Daddy turned loose his guns on the Governor. I firmly believe that one small incident contributed largely to bringing about this change in policy. The story kept coming to us that Mrs. O'Daniel had told several people in San Antonio, while she was over there, what a sweet old couple my parents were. And she was further supposed to have added that when Mamma came to call on her at the Mansion she was so feeble she could hardly walk up the steps. The story as told to us was no doubt exaggerated, and probably had been manufactured out of whole cloth. Mamma was sixty-five years old in 1940, but if there was ever an active person — at any age — it is Miriam A. Ferguson. Mamma at sixty-five was physically vigorous, and her voice on the radio was that of a woman of forty. During the entire campaign she spoke over the radio two mornings each week at seven o'clock. Further, she traveled the length and breadth of our vast state of Texas between these broadcasts.

Each morning Mamma would take one plank from her platform and thoroughly discuss its workable value. Her talk on education elicited numerous telephone calls and fan letters of approval. The talk that seemed to have the most popular appeal of all this series of early morning broadcasts was the one on Wednesday, July 10. It dealt with that plank in her platform which proposed to do something about the wide discrimination of business against employing people over 45 years of age.

I quote excerpts from this broadcast not only because

it was well received but also because it gives an insight into the type of campaign waged by Miriam A. Ferguson.

Good morning, my friends!

I am sure that you are feeling as I do this morning, happy that the season of disastrous floods seems to have passed and that our people are once more busily engaged in building back the damaged buildings and replanting washed-out crops.

Whenever we have a catastrophe like the recent floods in the Hallettsville and Cuero areas, I realize anew the wonderful spirit of Texas and Texans, and I am deeply grateful for the privilege of being born under the Texas star. The courage and determination of our people in the face of danger and disaster give me not only a great feeling of pride but also a sense of security. . . . This kind of spirit is a part, a very fine part, of national defense.

Like all of you who are listening in, I have grieved in my heart with the families and friends of those who have suffered the tragic loss of loved ones in the unexpected and unprecedented disaster. Like you also I admire the high courage and determination with which personal grief has been borne silently while all efforts have been turned to the work of rehabilitation. . . .

This morning I want to speak to you about a plank in my platform which has aroused much favorable interest and comment.

For several years I have noted with growing concern the discrimination against the employment of men and women who have reached the age of forty-five. I reached the conclusion that justice and fairness demanded that some notice be taken of this discrimination and that the facts in the case ought to be brought out.

It may be that no law has been violated in this widespread practice of discrimination in employment because of age, but such a practice amounts to a vicious civil service and ought to be stopped by an aroused public attitude and by proper legal procedure. The Ferguson platform stands for the removal of this barrier to employment, and I shall not retreat from the stand I have taken.

Let's bring the picture close home. Let's think of this thing in terms of men and women we know and respect, whose willingness and ability to earn a living have never



been questioned and whose right to do so has been taken for granted.

Let's take the case of Mr. Jones. He lives across the street from you, and his children and your children have played together. They shared their sandpiles, their bicycles, their baseball mitts and their dolls. The grade-school years rushed by, and before you knew it the Jones children and your children were in high school. Expenses mounted somewhat, and you began to realize that very soon you would be faced with the problem of providing for college, business school, or technical school training for your children. You want them to have the very best training possible in order that they may be good citizens and that they may fit into the business world and be able later to provide adequately for their own homes and families. Mr. Jones across the street has the same ambition for his children. Both of you devote more time to your business. You cut out unnecessary expenses, cheerfully, willingly, for you are determined to see your children given the opportunities you feel are necessary for their future happiness and success. At the same time you want to continue to do your part for your town, your state, and your country. You and Mr. Jones want to continue to make your contributions to local charities, to pay your taxes promptly in order that governmental processes may be carried on. You feel the importance of these things now more than you did twenty years ago for you have achieved a broader outlook as the years have passed. . . .

Both of you realize more than ever before the importance of the job if you are to do your full part by your family and by society.

Let's say that you own your own business, but Mr. Jones is city salesman for what has always been a well-established and prosperous concern. You know that he is interested in his job for during the years he has been your neighbor he has talked to you many times about his work and you have been impressed with his enthusiasm, with his good business sense, and with his loyalty to the firm for which he worked. With the passing of the years there has been no letting down, and Mr. Jones at 45 is keenly alert, mentally and physically, keenly interested in his job, and looking forward happily to many years of willing and useful service.

But this is not to be. While you and Mr. Jones have been busy and happy with your work and with your civic activities, a cruel practice has been gaining ground. Someone has initiated a wicked propaganda against the employment of men and women 45 years of age and over. Someone has started the silly and senseless argument that people of this age have begun to slip, that mentally and physically they are not at their best.

Some slick efficiency expert has sold the head of Mr. Jones' concern on this idea. One day Mr. Jones steps across your shady, quiet little street to tell you that because of his age he has been relieved of his job to be replaced by a younger man.

Except for the serious and worried look on your neighbor's face you would be inclined to laugh. The idea seems at first not so stupid as ridiculous. Jones fired because of age? Jones who is within a year of your own age? Jones who plays catch with the boys on the vacant lot? Jones who last summer taught every child in town how to swim? This is the same Jones who during the past year led all the other salesmen for his concern in the amount of goods sold. This is the same man who last winter led the movement in the organization of a club for boys in the section around the railroad tracks. That club salvaged a lot of good human material.

You are stunned, but you tell Mr. Jones that with his splendid health, his well-known ability and his equally well-known liking for hard work, he will soon be employed again, able once more to make adequate provision for his family and to contribute to community needs.

But while you and Mr. Jones have been happily busy with your work, your families, and your civic interests and activities, this abominable propaganda, aimed at the man and woman of 45 or over has been used with telling effect. Certain promoters of the idea have gathered a lot of statistics and juggled them into a hocus-pocus which seems to have impressed certain heads of business organizations.

Mr. Jones makes personal calls on several concerns in his own and neighboring cities. At first he confines these calls to concerns in the line of business in which he had been successfully employed for so many years and which he knew so well. But there were no openings for a man of 45.

His cash reserve was dwindling and Mr. Jones made



frantic efforts to find any kind of employment. You know the dreary routine. . . .

Mr. Jones' attractive little home was first mortgaged, later sold. His son, an honor student in high school, did not enter college for the engineering training on which he had set his heart. Immature, untrained and unseasoned, he took a job at small pay in order to help defray family expenses. His daughter did not finish with her class in high school for she had to drop out and go to work.

Eventually, the Joneses moved away and you lost track of them. An able man, trained and willing to work, was deprived of the opportunity because at 45 years of age he was cast aside by an unfair and utterly senseless discrimination in the matter of age.

My friends, there are too many cases of this kind. I have had them called to my attention time and again. This discrimination is striking at people I know and people that you know. I am proud that the Ferguson platform has a plank aimed at this unfair practice.

History bears out my contention that the passing of the years heightens rather than decreases one's ability and general fitness. Our beloved Robert E. Lee was 54 when he became Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate Army. He was nearly 60 when he took up an entirely new line of endeavor as president of a great educational institution.

General Pershing was 57 years old when he led the American Expeditionary Force. Today at 80 his advice and opinion are sought by world leaders.

Paderewski, the most famous pianist the world has ever known, at the age of 59 formed a coalition ministry in his sadly disorganized Poland. Not too old to drop his life-work temporarily and at 59 to lend his mental talent and his wide experience to the field of politics and government.

Schumann-Heink, beloved all over the world by music lovers, famed for her concert and opera work, in her late seventies took up an entirely new line of endeavor in moving pictures.

You and I both know hundreds of people, not famous, perhaps, but very fit at 50 and at 60 for the work they are doing, happy and eager to continue to be of service.

Too old at 45, at 50, at 60! NONSENSE!

I am a very determined woman and I expect, with your help, to do something about this when I am again elected governor.

This was typical of Miriam A. Ferguson's motherly interest in those who suffer, whether from the elements or advancing age.

The campaign of 1940 was different. It seemed to ebb and flow. There were several points of high tide, when victory seemed certain; and then the tide would go out, and through a sixth sense I would feel that all was lost. Gladys Little, Mamma's campaign manager and devoted friend, has often said to me, since the close of that race:

"There were several periods during the campaign when I felt we might have turned the tide had we had the money to buy more radio time."

W. Lee O'Daniel won in the first primary by a majority of fifty-five per cent of all votes cast. We Fergusons are not the kind to alibi and whine because we lose. It has always been our philosophy that everything happens for the best, though it does not seem so at the time.

After all, the motto on the Ferguson coat of arms is *Dulci Ex Asperis*, which means 'Sweets out of Bitters.' I suppose there is a reason for everything.



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## CHAPTER XXIV

### **The Last Heat**

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THE LATE SPRING of 1941 brought the death of United States Senator Morris Sheppard. Daddy and Senator Sheppard had rarely agreed on any political issue, and least of all on the Eighteenth Amendment, of which Senator Sheppard was the author. Nevertheless, Daddy's comment on his death was: "His passing is a great loss to America in this critical period of our history."

Senator Sheppard's body was hardly cold before the politicians' pots began boiling in Texas over his political carcass. The enemy press, as well as the friendly papers, carried stories predicting that Daddy would be a candidate to succeed the late senior Senator from Texas. They based their prediction largely on the fact that, although Daddy had been denied the right to hold state office, the post of United States Senator was one from which his impeachment did not bar him. Although many urged him to enter the race, he never seriously considered it. He perhaps realized that his increasing deafness had contributed largely to his wife's defeat in her race for governor in 1940, and that it could only prove a greater handicap to him as a candidate.

Instead of being a candidate himself, Daddy threw his full support to Governor W. Lee O'Daniel. Again was the adage, "Politics makes strange bedfellows" proved true. There were twenty-seven candidates in the field, but only four of them really stirred the political pot to boiling. The Governor's most formidable opponent was young Congress-

man Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson gained the support of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and with the presidential blessing, ran Governor O'Daniel a tight race.

"Pappy" O'Daniel campaigned with his hillbilly band. While O'Daniel was entertaining the populace with song Lyndon Johnson was carrying on a vigorous campaign for preparedness. Those "in the know" were sure it was only a question of time before we would be attacked. Our Selective Service Army had been started in September 1940. The proof that O'Daniel was not aware of our true position in world affairs was evidenced by his vote not long after he reached Washington as senator. He voted to disband our Selective Service Army and send those boys home who had had only a year's military training. This was less than four months before Pearl Harbor.

The other runners-up in the race for United States Senator were Texas Attorney-General Gerald Mann, who was heartily supported by the Methodists of Texas, and Congressman Martin Dies. The latter's exposé of enemy aliens in our land brought Dies considerable support from all sections. Someone commented on the senatorial race: "That was a race between the Lord, Roosevelt, and the Methodists." This time, Jim Ferguson had chosen to support the Lord and the Ten Commandments, and he won.

It was a two-fold victory. "Farmer Jim," as Daddy styled himself in the beginning of his political career, "Old Jim," as his enemies called him, "Governor Jim," as his many friends affectionately called him, or, just plain "Jim," as thousands knew him — now had a United States Senator with whom he was well pleased. His old friend, Coke Stevenson, who was then Lieutenant Governor of Texas, automatically became Governor. Daddy had worked hard to bring about Stevenson's election as Speaker of the House of Representatives several years previously. What greater satisfaction could come to the Fergusons of Texas than to have their friends in public office! Unfortunately, however, I fear that before Daddy died he was bitterly disappointed in both men.

At three-score years and ten Jim Ferguson still stood six feet tall, erect and distinguished in bearing. Handicapped



by deafness, his hair now quite gray, he weighed two hundred and thirty pounds. He faced the future with the same old Ferguson spirit and enthusiasm to live. His life partner, four years his junior, was far younger for her years than her husband. She weighed a hundred and sixty pounds; her size, plus her graying hair, combined to give "Governor Miriam" a grandmotherly appearance. She was energetic and gay.

Daddy's business interests from this time on were largely confined to hog raising and perfecting his dairy. In his diary we found exact instructions on how to build the best hog house. He also set forth his findings from his experiments in feeding hogs for best meat production. One account is of how he made a hog grow to weigh two hundred and seventy-seven pounds in six months on a diet of whole milk and water, supplemented with "shorts." He called it "My story of hog culture."

Except for an occasional mention of the state legislature, Daddy's thoughts seemed wholly occupied with his business, and with the war in Europe. The oncoming world conflagration preyed upon his mind to a great degree. He talked of nothing else. In a July entry in his diary he wrote:

"My grandson, George S. Nalle, Jr., has volunteered for the Air Corps. His father has been in the service almost a year."

Daddy would look at his other grandson, James Stuart Watt, Dorrace's boy, who was just a baby then, and shake his head and tell us:

"George, Jr., will be in this war, and James Stuart will be just the right age for the next war!"

Since 1935 I had had some small success in having published several articles I had written. Daddy took tremendous pride in me each time I "broke into print." He encouraged me by constantly urging me to work harder at my writing. During one of his business trips to Houston, while browsing through a bookstore, he found a copy of Crabb's *English Synonyms*. He brought the book to me, saying he had been looking for it for me for months. He had had a copy when he was a young man. He said that it helped him to broaden

his vocabulary. In this volume, which I prize chiefly because he brought it to me, he wrote:

Given to my dear daughter, Ouida Ferguson Nalle, in the hope that it will aid her in a laudable ambition to become a writer of good English. With every good wish from her father, James E. Ferguson.

Since June 1941, I had been in Washington with my husband, where he had been ordered for duty with the General Staff. Our son, George, Jr., had received his degree from the University of Texas in June and had joined the Air Corps. Dorrace and her family had built a new home in Enfield and had moved out from under the parental roof.

This scattering of his brood, and the gathering of obvious war clouds over the country, were beginning to have a great effect on Daddy. His letters to me showed him to be most pessimistic. He wrote:

"I have begun to feel the ravages of old age, and my strength is slowly failing. I went to Dr. Watt for a checkup. He reports my kidneys, liver, heart and blood pressure normal, but says I must reduce. I weigh two hundred and thirty pounds. He put me on a diet of water. I have been bothered with dizziness and rheumatism in my knees."

To me, these were heart-breaking words from the once strong "Eagle of Texas." It was too evident that "His iron will had ridden hard upon his sturdy frame."

1942 found my husband back on staff duty in Texas. Our return was a great comfort to Daddy, who was by this time a very sick man. He was no longer able to spend the entire day at his office. By November, he had to give up all business duties except for an occasional ride to the farm. Dr. Will Watt, our family physician, told me frankly there was nothing that could be done to help him. He said it was just a question of time. George and I took him to Temple to see the doctors there. They gave us the same diagnosis. Several weeks later we took him to Galveston, where the physicians told us the same thing.

This continued searching after a ray of hope for Daddy's recovery was comforting to us all. We knew we had done



our utmost to bring him back to health, or, at least, give him relief from suffering and pain.

It was a cold, gray, wintry day when we left the hospital at Temple. The wind was blowing, as it can blow only on that prairie. Our hearts were heavy. Daddy was trying to be cheerful to bolster our spirits, while we, in turn, assumed a forced gaiety to encourage him.

We asked him if he would like to go by to see Aunt Laura, the old colored woman who had been in the Ferguson household practically all her life. That was the last time Daddy ever saw her. He told us he would also like to drive by the new McCloskey Army Hospital at Temple. It was then only a little more than half-completed. The sight of those bleak, cheerless piles of brick on the bald prairie seemed to worry him. The enormous expanse of the buildings gave him a stark realization of what war meant. He said, earnestly:

"When I am stronger I hope to return and help the people of Temple plant some trees and shrubs to make this place a little more cheerful."

"Farmer Jim" did not live to see this dream fulfilled. But after he was gone, his many friends from all parts of Texas planted hundreds of dollars' worth of trees and shrubs on the hospital grounds in memory of their friend, James E. Ferguson, of Texas.

Christmas 1942, was brightened for all of us by a visit from George, Jr. This was his first trip home since he entered the Air Corps as an aviation cadet in 1941.

George brought great news. He was to be married in June to Miss Anne Byrd Woods, of Baltimore. His grandparents had not met the lady, but, in their opinion, she was a very lucky girl. They gave their grandson their blessing and good wishes.

When George, Jr., told his grandfather how sweet his girl was, Daddy chuckled and replied: "Well, I hope you won't be like the fellow who had a sweetheart that was so sweet he felt like he could eat her, but after he had been married to her for a year, he wished he had eaten her."

Just before Christmas I took over the complete management of the farm, the piggery, and the dairy. Daddy had

been a very sick man much longer than we had realized. This was reflected in the condition of his business affairs when I took over. I had a hard task before me. I struggled with old feed bills and with the constantly increasing price of current ones. I sold the hogs and all low-producing milch cows. I invested in a fine bull in an effort to build up the dairy herd. I studied farm and dairy magazines, and read government crop reports at night. My days were spent on the farm eight miles from Austin. Labor was very scarce and inefficient. In one year's time my hair turned almost snow-white from sheer worry. It would have been a difficult job for any woman at any time, but it was especially hard in wartime. The raising of hogs, and dairy farming, were new ventures for me.

The labor on the place resented me for two reasons. First, the fact that I was a woman was distasteful to them. Second, I was much stricter with them than Daddy had ever been. They never knew at what moment Mrs. Nalle would show up! They always had warning of Daddy's coming, because he didn't drive an automobile, and, consequently, had to telephone one of the men to come for him.

On March 29, 1943, Daddy wrote me a letter of appreciation for all I had done on the farm. This letter, written in a trembling hand, repays me for any and all the work I did. The letter begins:

DEAR DAUGHTER:

My wife and I are very appreciative of the efforts you are making to improve the operations of the dairy farm, both cows and swine.

I think it was a good idea to buy the fine bull. I also think it was a good idea to buy the fine bull calf from Carington. Here is what I have in mind for the hogs. . . .

For two full pages of the letter he went into great detail on hog feeding. I never had the heart to tell Daddy that I had sold his precious loves, the pigs. He didn't know that by that time somebody else was feeding his cherished hogs! Daddy closed his letter with a personal word to me. He wrote:

I am thankful for your continued loyalty to the family



interests, and I am confident everything will work out all right. I am, your loving — DADDY.

Feed and labor prices continued to increase, and the task I had undertaken grew harder each day. By March 1944, I had managed to clear up all indebtedness against the farm. Meanwhile, I had acquired a good case of shingles, and had grown a shock of white hair. As a consequence, I decided it would be better to sell out the business and rent the land. At that time, secondhand machinery was bringing a good price. I bought ten gallons of paint, and every day for two weeks I took my lunch and spent the entire day on the farm painting machinery. When this job was finished I made a trade with Mr. Joe McBride, an auctioneer, to conduct a sale for me. On Thursday, April 6, 1944, we sold at auction everything on the place. I knew it was the wisest thing to do.

The auction was like an old-fashioned political gathering, and people came from far and near to bid and buy. Everything went fine for me until it came time to call the faithful team of farm mules to the block. When I saw "Old Blue" and "Brandy" knocked down to the highest bidder, it was all I could do to hold back my tears.

While I had been struggling with financial problems for two years, Mamma, the good soldier always, was fighting a losing battle nursing Daddy.

In the full height of his physical vigor he had needed her in political crises, and she had stood by him through "thick and thin." In his last illness he needed her more than ever. She never faltered.

Blessed with good nurses, she devoted her entire time to making Daddy comfortable. She saw to the preparation of palatable, nourishing food for him in a futile effort to keep up his waning strength. She watched him grow weaker day by day. From a tremendous man of two hundred and thirty pounds, he wasted away to less than a hundred pounds. Ever faithful, for two years she kept her vigil day and night.

Mamma had no thought of cataloging her friends. She was deeply grateful to those friends from all over Texas who did come to see her regularly through those long months of trial. Almost every State official, from Lieutenant Governor

John Lee Smith on down, came or called frequently to inquire about Daddy's condition. Political friends and former political enemies alike remembered her in her sorrow. Congressman Lyndon Johnson, the candidate whom Daddy had *not* supported in his race for the United States Senate against W. Lee O'Daniel, called at 1500 Windsor Road every time he came to Austin. When leaving, he would put his arm around Mamma and ask her if there was anything in the world he could do for her. Lyndon Johnson was too big a man to hold it against Daddy that he had not supported him in his Senate race. "Governor Jim" was critically ill, and Lyndon Johnson showed his concern in many ways.

On February 28, 1944, Daddy suffered a severe stroke, from which he never regained full consciousness.

On September 20, 1944, Mamma telephoned me in the afternoon to say there had been a decided change in Daddy's condition since I was at his bedside at noon. The next afternoon, on September 21, 1944, at 2:30 o'clock, God's finger touched him, and he was relieved of all this world's suffering.

We could not grieve. We could only say "God's will be done!" Daddy had lived a full life, rich in accomplishment for his family and his state. We could not, for one moment, wish to call him back just to be with us, since it would only mean for him putting on again the robe of physical suffering.

Thus it was that "Farmer Jim" lost the last heat of the race to the arch enemy of mankind, DEATH. His faithful running mate of the years was left to go her last mile alone in the quiet house on Windsor Road, in Austin, Texas.

THE END.



# **I n d e x**

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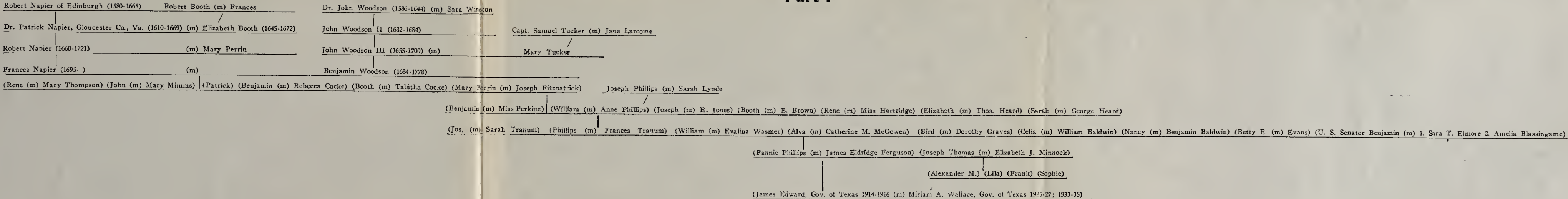
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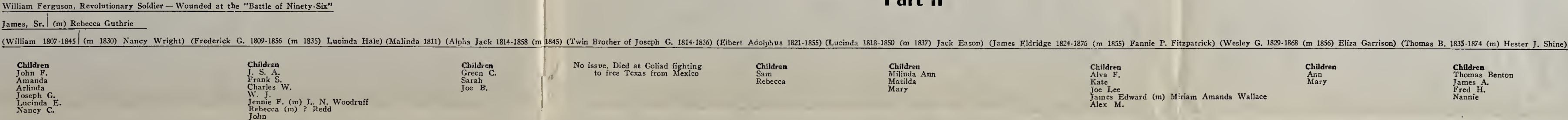
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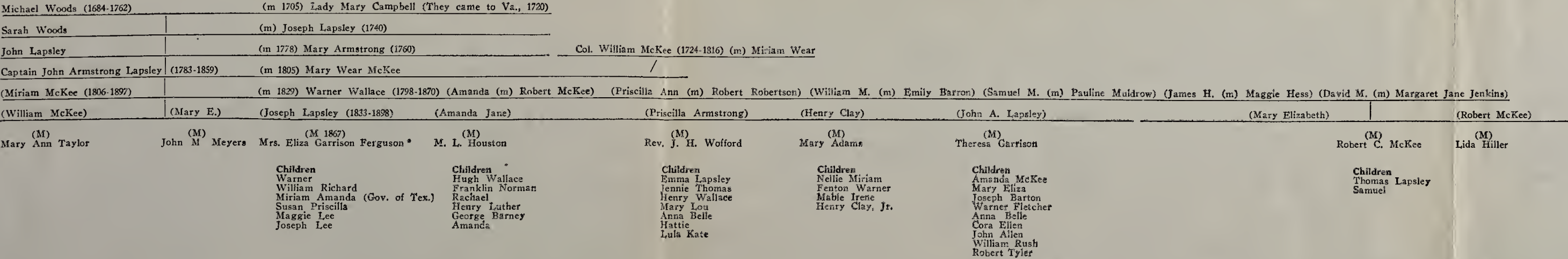
Genealogical Chart of Governor James Edward Ferguson
Part I



Part II



Genealogical Chart of Governor Miriam Amanda Wallace Ferguson



\* Note: This Eliza Garrison's first husband was Wesley G. Ferguson. She was the daughter of Mitchell Garrison, a Captain in Sam Houston's Army, Republic of Texas. His wife was Ellender Toomey. Their children were: Ellender, John, William, Susan Nancy, Theresa & Eliza.





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